Modelling University Educational Development Units

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Abstract

This thesis explores the precarious position of educational development units (EDUs) in the modern university. EDUs face the challenge of bringing about government inspired change, particularly, though not exclusively, with regard to exploiting new technologies in the practice of professionals trained to be critical of external demands, and whose practice is informed more by their disciplines than by their employers, their universities. The thesis therefore explores, using five case studies of EDUs, how those working in such units see the ways to meet the challenge of change, conceptualise the purpose of the university, the practice of university teaching, and the introduction of new technologies into the curriculum with a view to establishing a narrative of educational development from those working in the field. Using data from interviews and documents, the case studies suggest that in order to survive, EDUs do draw largely on their own institutions for their narrative, with the result that each EDU tends to reflect the focus of its own university, rather than draw inspiration from an external common view of universities. Rather than a factory based model of change based on high levels of power and resources, EDUs appear to have more in common with the pre-industrial household, in that they offer small, highly specialised services to relatively small groups of people, where necessary employing additional faculty based colleagues to pursue specific projects. This, along with the relationship building in which EDUs engage, enables units to break down barriers between disciplines through the sharing of practice between colleagues in different faculties. Thus the EDU, despite its small size, plays an important role in unifying the university, and in building an institutional brand.

Contents

Table of Figures

Chapter 1 Introduction

Introduction

University educational development units (EDUs) are small centres for enhancing teaching and learning across the whole university. Relatively new and under researched, they arguably have yet to develop a coherent narrative for their roles which is explored by this thesis, by investigating how EDU staff perceive their units' functions and purposes. Academic interest has previously focussed on educational technological development for enhancing teaching and learning more than on the roles of EDUs themselves, the subject of this thesis. In order to create a model of how an EDU functions, literature is reviewed on EDUs and on models of universities and this is then compared with four original case studies of existing EDUs and one of a disbanded EDU. This last provides a powerful example of the risks to EDU survival and thus is one of the reasons for this thesis. The scope of the study was limited to EDUs in England, partly due to resource constraints, but also because there has been a significant funding stream for educational development in that country, the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, and thus it is reasonable to argue that specific expectations have been placed on development units.

While the EDU has become a feature of the landscape of HE, it is not easy to delineate the territory it occupies. This chapter therefore introduces the thesis by providing a short overview of the research that was undertaken, the questions that were asked, and the design of the research. It also provides a working definition of an EDU, sets out a rationale for the study and describes the external and internal contexts for higher education that have led to the development of a deficit model which exercises considerable influence on how EDUs prioritise their activities. I next discuss my personal values as a member of an EDU myself, in order to assist readers in making their own judgements on the data and discussions. Finally the chapter concludes with an outline of the rest of the thesis.

Research questions and research design

In aiming to generate EDU models seeking to demonstrate possible benefits to an organisation, such as wider links to organisational strategies it is necessary to ask the following questions. First, what is the relationship between EDU staff's perception of their role, and hypothetical models of the university derived from the literature? This relationship might be expected to play some role in generating the EDU's own narrative of educational development. Secondly, as EDUs are primarily responsible for enhancing the quality of university teaching, and because there is evidence that university teaching is taking on new forms, (Scott 2005) how do those working in EDU's conceptualise the enhancement of university teaching? One of the major influences that Scott identifies is new technology, which often mandates changes to practice (Cornford and Pollock 2003). A third research question then, is how do EDU staff approach the development of colleagues with respect to the practice of introducing technology into their teaching?

These questions are wide in scope, but they share a common thread. They all deal with the relationship between the EDU and university teachers. A case study approach was chosen as the best way of exploring how the staff of an EDU interact with colleagues. Interviewing staff was chosen as the primary data collection strategy. In order to set the interviews in context a multiple case study design was chosen as this allows data from interviews to be triangulated with data from documents published by the unit, web sites, and subjective impressions from field notes made on the visits to the unit, and thus enables a more complete picture of the cases to be drawn. Researching the answers to these questions requires some sensitivity. EDUs appear to be primarily responsible for changing the practices of colleagues, which could be interpreted as a threat by those colleagues. Furthermore, in the absence of a coherent narrative of educational development, EDUs take on many forms, and occupy different positions within university structures (Gosling, 2001). Hence it is necessary to decide exactly what constituted an EDU for the purposes of the research.

Definitions

When EDUs first began to emerge in the 1960s they appear to have been concerned with pragmatic aspects of improving teaching (Gosling, 2008:44), but with the rapid growth in the number of EDUs that took place around the turn of the 21st Century, EDUs seem to have become more concerned with student learning, and pursuing what Land, (2004) refers to as a domesticating agenda, or a concern with implementing institutional policy. Teaching and learning are closely related, but EDUs have become much more concerned with generic quality improvement initiatives relating to the university's learning environment. In 2008, when this research was conducted, there were 62 units listed on the publicly accessible web sites of English universities that performed some the functions in Gosling's 2001 study (See Table 1.1). Even though one or two of the units listed appear to be entirely virtual, there was some form of provision in approximately 68% of England's 91 universities. (HEFCE, 2008) The web addresses are listed in appendix A

The result of the shift towards quality enhancement appears to have been that, as table 1.1 shows EDUs acquired a variety of names reflecting their different areas of practice.

Institution	EDU name
Birmingham University	Learning Development Unit
Imperial College London	Centre for Educational Development
King's College London	King's Institute of Learning & Teaching
Leeds University	Learning Development Unit
London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE)	Teaching & Learning Centre
Manchester University	Teaching & Learning Assessment Office
Nottingham University	Staff & Educational Development Unit
Oxford University	The Oxford Learning Institute
Sheffield University	Learning & Teaching Support Unit
University College	Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching
Warwick University	Centre for Academic Practice
Bath University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Office
Birkbeck, University of London	Centre for Learning & Professional Development
Bradford University	Teaching Quality Enhancement Group
Brunel University	Learning & Teaching Development Unit
City University	Educational Development Centre
East Anglia University	Centre for Staff & Educational Development
Essex University	Learning & Teaching unit
Exeter University	Education Development Unit

Goldsmiths, University of London	Centre for Excellence in Learning Technology
Hull University	Centre for Learning Development
Kent University	Unit for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching
Lancaster University	Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching
Leicester University	No unit as such, but what appears to be a wiki based site to which all staff can contribute to.
Queen Mary	Educational & Staff Development.
Reading University	Centre for the Development of Teaching & Learning
Royal Holloway	Educational Development Centre
Salford University	Educational Development Unit
School of Oriental & African Studies	Learning & Teaching Unit
Surrey University	Centre for Learning Development
Sussex University	Teaching & Learning Development Unit
York University	Academic Support Office
Anglia Ruskin University	University Centre for Teaching & Learning * (name to be changed)
Bournemouth University	Academic Support
Brighton University	Centre for Learning and Teaching
Canterbury Christ Church University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit
Central England University	Staff & Student Development Unit
Central Lancashire University	Learning Development Unit
Chester University	Learning & Teaching Institute
Coventry University	Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Edge Hill University	Teaching & Learning Development Unit
Gloucestershire, University of	Academic Development Unit
Hertfordshire University	Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching
Kingston University	Academic Development Centre
Leeds Metropolitan University	Skills for Learning – not identifiable as a unit – mostly web pages
Lincoln University	Teaching & Learning Development Office
Liverpool Hope University	Centre for Learning and Teaching
Liverpool John Moores University	Learning Development Unit
London Metropolitan University	Centre for Academic & Professional Development
London South Bank University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit
Manchester Metropolitan University	Learning & Teaching Unit
Northampton, University College	Office of Learning & Teaching
Northumbria University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement -
Oxford Brookes University	Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development
Plymouth University	EdAlt
Portsmouth University	Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement
Sheffield Hallam University	Learning & Teaching institute
Staffordshire University	Learning Development and Innovation
Sunderland University	Learning Development Services
Thames Valley University	Educational Development Unit -
Winchester University	Learning & Teaching (Virtual?)
Wolverhampton University	Centre of Excellence in Learning & Teaching

Table 1.1. The Variation in English EDU names (January 2008)

In 2008, when this research was conducted, the web sites, which are listed in appendix A, also indicated considerable variety in staff structures and positions within the organisation, rendering it difficult to define exactly what constitutes an EDU. The table is included for illustrative purposes rather than as a definitive description of EDU provision in England as EDUs are somewhat prone to re-organisation (Gosling, 2007).

The list of web sites at appendix A was examined to identify what activities EDUs were undertaking, in order to identify potential case studies. There is, in the literature, evidence that EDUs need to be able to point to tangible evidence of their activities. One study quotes the head of an unidentified unit as saying that:

> *"you have to have hard edged tools that demonstrate cost benefits in the language that institutional leaders and finance directors understand". (Thompson, 2004: 54).*

One such activity is likely to be the provision of training and development activity, and Gosling's 2001 study suggested that this was something in which EDUs were heavily engaged. This had some influence on the selection of cases for this research. For a unit to be considered as an EDU for this thesis, there first had to be evidence that it provided some form of training or development in university teaching. A second theme in Thompson's (2004) study was that an EDU should be able to measure and demonstrate the impact it was having on others. Therefore for the purpose of this research the EDU's visited should not be part of the organisational structure of a single faculty, but should deal with all the faculties in the university, and as far as possible provide development for those working in departments concerned with the support of teaching. Finally, the author's own experience as an educational developer suggested that generic technologies used for administrative purpose such as the Microsoft Office suite of programs were quite readily accepted by academics, more so than the use of technologies that have been developed for teaching purposes for example, virtual learning environments, or anti-plagiarism software. A final criteria therefore was that there was some evidence that the EDU was doing some work in this area.

Rationale

As appendix A indicates, there are at least sixty units currently operating in English universities alone and if the average number of staff employed in an EDU is 10.3 full time equivalent staff (Gosling, 2007:19) then that suggests that at least 630 people are currently employed in English EDUs. That figure may be an underestimate of the number of people involved as there are others who have a distributed role, for example those who are based in faculties, rather than the units, but who still have a responsibility for educational development and work closely with the unit. It appears, then, that higher education has made a significant investment in educational development units.

The need to devise a model for EDU roles in leading teaching and learning developments arises from their relationship to imperatives for change in university teaching since the end of the Second World War. Student numbers and diversity have been expanded through government policies; helping to cope with this could be seen as an EDU responsibility. UK governments' post-1980s neo liberal policies have marketised and commodified higher education (Naidoo, 2005); universities are not state institutions but their main funding since the 1960s has been state-provided. Thus they have become more state-agents and subject to direction on improving their teaching. This included making graduates more "employable" with "transferable skills" as well as disciplinary knowledge and skills (Chisholm, 2008) which have come to be seen as the concern of EDUs. Thirdly, the possibilities provided by information technology, which have effected large-scale changes in the way that work and leisure are conducted (Raschke, 2003), have likewise offered opportunities for university teaching which can be guided by EDUs. Finally, pedagogical research has transformed understanding of the way students learn (Moon, 1999; Biggs, 2003) and thus raised issues of how this understanding is to be translated into university teaching.

Contextual influences for a model of the EDU

It is well documented that higher education is under some pressure to respond to social change (Evans, 2004). Given the EDU's concern with teaching and learning, it is appropriate to review the way these social changes have influenced policy making at both national and institutional level. Even if policy making has not directly affected the EDU itself it has been influential in determining the context in which it operates, and thus indirectly, its role. Much of this policy has been determined by changes in student numbers and student cohorts. These have became more gender equitable, expanded to attract members of wider social classes and to include those with disabilities which had been seen as preventing them from benefiting from a university education. Latterly mature students and ethnic minorities have further undermined the stereotype of students as white, British 18-21 year olds.

Policy makers (and/or) governments

National higher education policy in the United Kingdom over the last half century appears to have been largely driven by the concept that universities are failing to meet the challenge of the changing student profile, although some argue that the expansion that has taken place still falls short of reflecting the diversity of society (Leathwood, 2006). This expansion has also seen a change to the funding model for higher education. Students now make a significant financial contribution to their tuition, something that has altered the relationship between those who teach in universities and their students, making it more like the relationship between a supplier and a customer than that between a teacher and a learner (Taylor, 1999). This is a significant break with a past in which universities were seen as autonomous seats of learning where the advanced study of a relatively small number of disciplines was pursued. In the kind of environment framed by this deficit model an EDU may be as concerned with matters such as measuring student satisfaction and encouraging wider participation in higher education. These kind of activities may render the EDU's agendas less relevant to the values of academic colleagues, who may see these matters more as the concern of university administrators, than of themselves.

The growth of a deficit model of higher education can be traced by briefly reviewing the history of Government policy towards HE in the latter part of the Twentieth Century, showing how the role of the EDU has become problematised in the modern university. In 1963, the Robbins report proposed that 'all young persons qualified by ability and attainment to pursue a full time course in higher education should have the opportunity to do so', (Committee on Higher Education, 1963:8) largely as a matter of economic necessity, but also in order to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population of young people.

> *We do not believe that modern societies can achieve their aims of economic growth and higher cultural standards without making the most of the talents of their citizens. This is obviously necessary if we are to compete with other highly developed countries in an era of rapid social and economic change.* (Committee on Higher Education, 1963:8)

The report was perhaps the first indication of the beginnings of a shift from an elite model of higher education, to a system of mass, provision, one implication being that a mechanism would be needed for improving teaching in order to cope with the latter. The idea of competition with other nations in the quotation above indicates a role for universities that is generated outside the disciplines, and can be seen as a harbinger of external attempts to impose models of teaching practice on academics.

Shortly after the publication of the Robbins Report, the Government in the United Kingdom began to create a more vocational type of higher education. In 1965, Anthony Crosland, then Secretary of State for Education, made a speech proposing a new type of institution, the polytechnic. The development of the polytechnics is relevant to this study because, as Booth (1999) shows, they were very successful in pursuing activities that the EDUs listed in table 1.1 currently list as their priorities. These included widening the range of courses available in higher education, opening access to far more diverse cohorts of students and offering a (then) unique system of peer review of course offerings, None of these activities would appear out of place in a university established prior to 1992.

There was never any intention that the polytechnics would be a substitute or a replacement for universities, or that being a polytechnic was a precursor to an institution becoming a university. They were envisaged as a different type of

institution with less autonomy than universities, placing a much greater emphasis on a service culture, less concerned with the pursuit of knowledge than with meeting economic needs. It is arguable that EDUs have been introduced into universities to achieve similar outcomes. Polytechnics were intended to secure an advantage for the nation in a competitive world by providing vocational, professional and industrial courses, and additionally provide more opportunities for higher education for working people (Booth, 1999:107). By the middle of the 1970s there were thirty polytechnics, in some cases as large as some universities. Yet the polytechnics tended to be seen as inferior to universities, and when the divide between universities and polytechnics was abolished in 1992 it was the polytechnics that were given "university status" rather than the reverse and indeed the former polytechnics are still "usually described as 'post-1992' or 'new' universities" (Stevenson and Bell, 2009:5). The use of these qualifiers suggest that these institutions are not seen as being universities in the fullest sense of the word by those who use them. If so then it would be possible to question whether educational development, if it has the same aims as those which informed the creation of the polytechnics is an appropriate function of a university.

That it is an appropriate function, is suggested by the fact that many older universities adopted many of the polytechnics' techniques in marketing, widening participation, subjecting curriculum offerings to wider scrutiny, and the development of a more service oriented culture. The foregoing description represents more of a continuum of practices across the sector, rather than a definitive split between practices in the polytechnic sector on the one hand, and in the university sector on the other. Universities are relatively autonomous organisations and it follows that there will be some variation in practice between them, but since 1992 the thrust of national policy making has been to reduce this variation. If the EDU is an agent of that reduction, then its staff may find themselves taking on a role that undermines both institutional and academic identity, and thus it risks being regarded as something of a threat within the institution.

A second report into higher education, which became known as the Dearing Report was published in 1997 (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). This was to set a clearer, albeit uncomfortable, agenda for the role of the EDU in the university. There was some continuity with the values of the earlier Robbins report,

with respect to intellectual growth and personal fulfilment, but there were three distinct new strands to the report, namely quality of teaching, access to university and funding (Barr and Crawford, 1998). The expansion envisaged by Dearing was not feasible given traditional models of public funding, so the report successfully argued for the introduction of tuition fees payable directly by students. This is not simply a matter of financial reform, "rather it is profoundly ideological, in that it is indicative of a much more dirigiste approach by the state to the work of the university" (Barnett, 1997:51-52). The introduction of tuition fees, along with the election of a New Labour government in 1997 that had made education a central plank of its policy commitments, did make greater resources available to universities, but also increased political interest in the quality of university teaching. Students were more likely to desire some return on the investment that they had made in higher education. Thus, when universities did begin to create EDUs, it was likely that those working in them would see their role as being one of persuading academic colleagues to develop their working practices around a national agenda, which may not necessarily match their own values.

The Dearing Report also expressed concern that universities were not taking the fullest possible advantage of the considerable investment has been made in technological development, for example in the Joint Academic Network (JANET) http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/services/janet.aspx (accessed 8th July, 2008) the infrastructure through which the universities' computing networks are delivered. Technology is ubiquitous outside the university; as a recent report puts it

> *Using technologies in all aspects of their studies, today's digital learners rarely see e-learning as a separate or special activity. They are adept at blending personal and institutionally owned technologies with traditional approaches to learning in ways that are unique to them (JISC, 2007a:4).*

The point is that technology is going to impact on universities, and EDUs may be forced to adopt a dirigiste approach to ensure that academics take advantage of it. This may be related to the advantages that technology can bring to the student experience but there are also some administrative benefits for an institution. For example, more students can be taught by fewer teachers. Overseas markets can be reached more easily. Workflows and administrative processes can be more easily

streamlined. Furthermore technology can help cope with increasing diversity among students. It is not always possible for every student to live on campus for three years, and in any case many would not wish to do so. Technology can be used to support and to market the university to off campus learners. It is also true that technology per person spend data are included in some university rankings, so the provision of online materials can be used to promote the image and recruitment appeal of the institution (Cornford and Pollock, 2003:5).

The Higher Education Funding Council for England established a Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund in 1999, shortly after the publication of the Dearing Report (HEFCE, 1999). This required universities who wished to access the fund to publish a teaching and learning strategy and to implement that strategy. The TQEF did not itself mandate the establishment of EDUs, which did exist before the establishment of the fund although they were less common. Many universities appear to have seen the establishment of an EDU as a mechanism for the creation and implementation of their teaching and learning strategies. Recently it has been announced that that the TQEF will no longer be ring-fenced for teaching and learning (HEFCE, 2009). This instrumental approach is re-iterated in the most recent government document on the future of higher education, which argues that universities should seek to diversify their sources of income. (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2009) This presents EDUs with a problem. If they are not in themselves significant generators of income and if, as the investment already made would suggest, educational development is thought to be worth doing, how can they demonstrate that they have made a difference? An important rationale for this thesis, then, is to devise a model that justifies the continuing funding of EDUs.

Universities

The state, or funding body, view of the role of the EDU thuse appears to be that it exists to assist universities to meet national aspirations for higher education. More specifically its roles include the facilitation of the teaching of more students, promoting accessibility to teaching for diverse cohorts, addressing issues of "student satisfaction" and encouraging the most effective exploitation of the affordances provided by new technologies. These practices need to be introduced to a diverse and

often critical community, academic staff, in a range of disciplines. The existence of national aspirations for higher education suggests that a coherent set of responses might be expected from universities, but this is unrealistic because of the heterogeneity of the university sector. There is considerable debate about the "Idea of the University". From the perspective of the EDU, the implication is that it has to respond to the national aspirations, described in the previous section while at the same time respecting the ideas that the university has about itself.

The challenge for an EDU is to establish a plausible story of "enhanced teaching" that does not undermine the university's own image of itself. The university, exists, either to conduct research into new knowledge, (Mueller-Vollmer, 2008) to act as a community of scholars where students might absorb an atmosphere of learning, (Newman, 1852) to investigate the complexity of contemporary knowledge and society, and in doing so to add ever more layers to that complexity (Barnett, 2000b) or more accurately, to do all of these things. Furthermore it is extremely difficult for an individual to gain acceptance as a practising member of a discipline. It requires several years of doctoral, and post-doctoral study and a number of publications in peer reviewed journals. This renders it difficult for those perceived as outsiders, that is those who have not undergone that process, to make suggestions about improving the quality of teaching within the discipline (Becher and Trowler, 2001). There is evidence of an emerging "academic tribe" (Becher and Trowler, 2001, Boon et.al, 2010) of academic developers, whose work is underpinned by a growing theoretical base. If they are in a university dominated by a managerialist agenda then developers will tend to emphasise activities that are prioritised by the directorate, vice chancellor, or whoever is responsible for the strategic direction of the university. In a more collegial environment they are likely to prioritise needs expressed by colleagues or on their own theoretical understandings of their role.

If it is difficult for an EDU to bring about changes to the practice of teaching in disciplines, it is also in the position of undermining what might be termed a well established "lay" model of the university which can be traced back to the Middle Ages. The origins of the university were associated with the growth of the monasteries (Pedersen, 1998). The monastic function appears to have been much

closer to that of a library, than that of an educational institution, in that they were mostly concerned with the preservation and copying of books. The way in which the medieval university developed has had lasting influence on the modern university, and consequently, if rather indirectly, on the work of the modern EDU. Because books were valuable commodities in the middle ages, and sites at which they could be stored and made available were few and far between, two important characteristics of the modern university emerged. First, access to it was limited to an elite group, those with access to the time and resources to attend. Secondly, because it was difficult to make books, or what we would now call 'learning resources' universally available, a particular approach to teaching was devised, namely the lecture.

This model illustrates why EDUs find it difficult to construct a narrative of educational development. Widening access and improving teaching methods are quite different activities, but both are legitimate concerns of the EDU. The desire of Government to widen access at a national level has already been discussed, and there has been criticism of the lecture's effectiveness as a teaching method (Laurillard, 2002, Sander, 2005). Despite these criticisms it has proved a remarkably enduring feature of university education, and apart from some technological advances with regard to visual aids, it has not fundamentally changed in form. While there are other aspects of university teaching that EDUs concern themselves with, the lecture serves as an illustration of how universities themselves contribute to the complexity of the framework in which EDUs are operating. On the one hand, there is dissatisfaction with the lecture as a teaching method. There are reports that lectures are poorly attended, (Moore *et al*, 2008, Baty, 2006) that students find it difficult to take notes, or to absorb what is being discussed (Mulligan and Kirkpatrick, 2000). On the other hand it is not difficult to find press reports that students feel they are not receiving value for money if a university attempts to deliver teaching in an alternative fashion. (Jenkins, 2009; Keeling, 2009). Furthermore the shift in the perception of the relationship between the tutor and student to that between producer and customer noted above, gives a validity to such public complaints, and renders them much more likely to produce demands that they be acted upon.

The lecture is not the only area in which an EDU may find it difficult to interact with its host institution. Appendix A provides a convincing illustration of the lack of clarity that exists around the role of the EDU. Nearly half of them have the phrase "learning and teaching", in their title. This in itself might cover a wide range of activities, including the introduction of radical new approaches to teaching, the adoption of new technologies, support for the development of study skills, or the design of an educational environment. There is no clear marking of the territory in which a member of staff working in an EDU should operate, their work may also require changes to long established practices, and may in certain circumstances undermine strongly held beliefs about the nature of university education. A possible consequence of this is that EDUs came to be perceived as the principal locus of technological innovation with regard to teaching. There is evidence in the literature that they are so perceived (Gosling, 2001:83). It is, however overly simplistic to equate technological development with "enhancement". The terms "educational developer" and "learning technologist" are not easily interchangeable (Hudson, 2009:17), rendering it difficult for an EDU, which often contains staff trying to combine both roles, to develop a coherent narrative around exactly what it is doing. It is not a simple matter to introduce technology into teaching. First there are a number of legislative considerations, including matters relating to copyright, data protection and provision for disabled students. Secondly, using technology effectively can mandate profound change to working practices. Technology is often seen as contributing to improving the effectiveness of learning, although exactly what constitutes "effective learning" is, of course, a matter of debate. Given the brief history outlined above there is a danger that "effectiveness" is more likely to be defined by the values of those who believe themselves to be paying for it, rather than the values of those involved in the delivery of teaching and learning. Thirdly, educational development activity that has a significant technological component is often criticised as being outside the everyday practice of the university. As one senior and very experienced educational developer memorably put it in a seminar attended by the author some years ago, technological educational development is often seen as being a collection of "Fred in the Shed" projects (Stiles, 2006). That is to say, it is of interest to those involved in the project, but not to those outside it, and from an institutional perspective there is little strategic coherence to the projects (Nimmo and Littlejohn, 2009). That, of course, reinforces

the argument that EDUs need to articulate a consistent narrative around their own understanding of effective learning.

Value Statement

Interpretations of the meanings of data collected in any research study are inevitably influenced by the values held by the researcher. Researchers are urged by some authors:

> *to be neutral and to do research that is technically correct and value free*
> *others tell them that their work is shallow and useless if it does not*
> *express a deep commitment to a value position (Becker, 1967:239)*

My own position is that I do not believe that research is ever value free, or that there can be an entirely neutral interpretation of data. The writer of a research paper cannot avoid bringing his or her values into the paper, although they can minimise the effect of those values. Nevertheless values inevitably influence the formation of the research question, (one would not ask a question if one did not care about the answer), the research design, data analysis and the presentation of the final report. In the next few paragraphs I therefore state my own position with regard to the role of EDUs in enhancing university teaching and hope the reader will forgive the rather personal nature of this section. It is included because I share a belief that 'overt exclusion of the author is fictional' (Thody, 2006:27) A research report is not an appropriate place for fiction so this section is included to assist the reader in making his/her own judgements about my interpretations.

I have worked in further and higher education since 1985, initially as a librarian, but in the mid 1990s moving into "learning advisor" positions, which mixed a variety of support roles, with doing some teaching. This led to my current role as a teaching and learning co-ordinator in an EDU. I was appointed to a unit called the Best Practice Office in January 2000, although that unit was renamed the Teaching and Learning Development Office in late 2001. In 2008 the unit was merged with an academic department, the International Institute for Educational Leadership to form a new Centre for Educational Research and Development, combining the roles of

educational development, and research, with delivering postgraduate programmes in education.

University teaching has always seemed to me to be a rather lonely profession with little support for practitioners, especially those who are new to the field. Some resources such as guidance on appropriate teaching materials, and, in some cases, pre-prepared materials were given to me but in addition some feedback on my own performance would have been more helpful in growing into the profession. That has led to my belief that activities such as peer observation are more appropriate activities for an EDU, than, for example, the development of teaching materials. I believe that staff in EDUs derive their narrative through interaction with colleagues rather than from theoretical models, and that models derived from normative externally generated change agendas may be a source of discomfort to EDU staff.

Finally, I believe that digital or any other technology is only likely to make a significant difference if it is used to do something that is appreciably different from what was done before. For example an EDU that provided help guides in, for example, replacing a set of overhead projector slides with a set of PowerPoint slides, makes little or no contribution to enhancing teaching and learning because it is simply modernising an existing practice, in this case the provision of visual aids. On the other hand, asking students to provide a set number of contributions to an online discussion group or to distribute sets of questions for them to work on, is significantly different from relying on a few enthusiastic students to put their hands up in a classroom situation. In this case the teacher can involve a greater number of students rather than simply teach to the front row. This approach does demand more of the teacher, and of the students, in the operation of the technology, but also in learning about the nature of digital interaction. It is in supporting this kind of innovative approach that the EDU can really make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of learning for all students, which I believe it must do, if it is to continue to justify its existence.

Thesis outline

The thesis is designed to model the way in which units can benefit their host university. The next chapter examines the literature on EDUs, the structure and

function of the university, and on technology. From that literature tentative models of how an EDU might interact with its host organisation are drawn. Chapter three describes and explains the choice of research methodology that was used, and gives a practical account of the research process as it was actually implemented. Chapter four presents the results of the data from the case studies and groups them into categories based on the research questions and the models described in chapter two. These groups then form the basis of a conceptual framework, and in Chapter 5 the data is discussed in the light of that framework, and the models identified in chapter two. Finally, Chapter six presents a new model illustrating how the educational development unit actually does work to effect change in teaching and learning practice and makes some recommendations suggesting how this might be further developed.

Conclusion

The EDU struggles to develop a narrative about its own role, balancing externally generated demands to bring about change in university teaching, in order to meet a range of external objectives, while respecting the independence of the academic disciplines that make up the university (Thompson, 2004, Becher & Trowler, 2001). In order to effect change the EDU and its clients need to arrive at a mutually agreed understanding of the meaning of concepts such as "improvement" and "quality of teaching" in an environment where there may be reluctance to accept any need for change. EDUs appear to have become the principal locus of the quality enhancement of teaching in universities (Gosling, 2001, 2006a, 2006b) attempting in particular, to address concerns that university teachers are not as adept as students at making use of new technologies, or that they are insufficiently responsive to what is sometimes characterised as "consumer" demand. EDUs are often seen simply as "service units" which may threaten their existence as traditionally, service units are funded through top-slicing. The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund has provided units with a source of funding, whose existence implies that educational development is something that is worth doing, which implies that universities ought to find ways to continue to do it.

There have already been indications that the banking crisis of 2008-9 is likely to lead to a sharp reduction in funding for higher education, and, by implication, EDUs. EDUS are very vulnerable to institutional re-organisation, (Gosling, 2001) and even if posts are not lost, priorities will inevitably change if units are absorbed in other units with a broader function. Educational development therefore needs a firm intellectual and organisational basis if it is to continue in any systematic way. It is easy for an academic department to tell its own story because the plot of the story is well established, and can be readily simplified. An academic physics department teaches and researches physics. A Computer Services department makes sure the university's ICT infrastructure works. These are oversimplifications. There are debates about which aspects of the discipline the physics department should teach, what proportion of time should be devoted to research and to teaching and the Computing Services department makes decisions about software, licensing networks and other matters that do not directly impinge on their users' day to day practice. The point is that their functions are not questioned because they can be readily expressed in simple terms. In this sense EDUs are different from other departments, as it is difficult to summarise their activities in a single phrase. Furthermore other departments could all point to negative consequences for the university if they were to be removed. It is much harder to envisage a university without a library or a careers office, than it is to envisage one without an EDU. If there is anything EDUs have in common it is that they are in the position of having been set up to improve something (university teaching) that is already there, and operating adequately, if not as well as it might.

EDUs' area of concern is thus directly related to the professional identity of teaching colleagues, their job being to suggest improvements to the way those colleagues do their job, if not to directly criticise their practice. Practitioners rarely welcome this kind of attention. It could be argued that development units have more in common with academic departments, than they do with service departments, in that they are seeking to increase the store of knowledge in their area, that of university teaching, rather than to provide the sort of on-demand solutions to perceived deficits that, say, a library, or a computing services department might offer. Macdonald, (2003:pp9-10) for example, suggests that perhaps it is time that a case be made for academic development to be recognised as a legitimate area, with its own traditions of research, scholarship and practice

This argument does not, however, provide a coherent, or even necessarily welcome narrative for those outside the EDU. Curricula, teaching methods and organisational forms do change to reflect the world outside, and in the highly connected world of the Twenty-First Century, the process of exchange of ideas about the nature and purpose of universities is likely to be accelerated. These ideas are of importance to students, their families, academic staff, university administrators, civil servants involved in the administration of higher education, and to politicians who ultimately will have to make decisions about where resources are to be directed. EDUs are caught up in this struggle, catering on the one hand to a range of ideas about the university that owe much to the tradition of critical and disciplinary thinking, and on the other to ideas that see the university as an instrument of state policy. As the literature on the university discussed in the next chapter makes clear, there is little agreement within the university about how such ideas should be received.

Chapter 2: The search for a model: The contributions from literature.

Introduction.

In chapter one a case was made that the recent growth in the number of EDUs was largely a response to the changing context of higher education, particularly the criticisms of university teaching made in the Dearing report. Given that this response is relatively recent, there is little literature directly dealing with EDUs's response to the policy changes ensuing from the report. Thus literature must be sought in related areas that may mention EDUs peripherally. First, Table 2.1 presents the results of a literature search for the terms 'educational development unit' and 'academic development unit', in comparison with the terms "educational development" and "academic development". This has been provided to illustrate the scarcity of research on the EDU, and to contrast this with the extensive literature that exists on the activity of educational development. The subsequent discussion briefly considers the multiple meanings of the phrase "educational development" in the light of the institution the EDU serves, the university. Secondly, the literature on the EDU itself is reviewed to identify the activities that EDUs are engaging in, and what effect they are having on their host universities, and on the higher education sector at large.

Thirdly, this study is concerned with how EDUs respond to external pressures, in particular those placed upon them by the introduction of funding streams for the enhancement of teaching quality, the focus is on educational development units, in a single country, England, as noted in the introduction. Therefore, the literature reviewed here is also limited to studies of units, and of universities in that country.

Table 2.1 reinforces the point that there is relatively little work published on the educational development unit, in contrast to an extensive literature on educational development. This may be poor coverage on the part of the index. There are later works that are not yet listed in the academic databases (Beckton, 2009; Gosling, 2009; Hughes C, 2009). Furthermore the terms educational development and academic development can have multiple meanings[1]. The relationship between the EDU and the

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[1] "Educational development" can also refer to the practice of remedial education in the school sector, which will also contribute to the high number of returns shown in the table.

university is not one-way, The purpose of this study is to find a model that demonstrates the role of EDUs and use that model to demonstrate how they can contribute to changing the practice of disciplinary academics. Given the paucity of literature on EDUs themselves, the chapter expands its range to review the literature on three important perceptions of the university, and uses them to draw out some speculative models of how a development unit might bring about sustainable change in each of those models. A conceptual framework of three potential roles for the EDU is identified from this literature. First, it is considered as a change agent, imposing ways of working on colleagues to enable the university to meet specific and often externally defined, social needs; secondly as a more collegial unit, working to serve the needs expressed by the faculties, and thirdly as a research and development unit, working to explore the potential of new technologies and persuading colleagues to adopt them

Database Search term	Academic Search Elite	ERIC	British Education Index	Google Scholar
Academic Development units	3	3	3	157
Academic Development	478	544	171	25800
Educational Development Units	3	10	9	306
Educational Development	1161	12633	2181	157000

Table 2:1: Prevalence of search terms in two educational and two generic databases (accessed 27 April 2009)

Perhaps the most distinctive finding that emerges from the literature on EDUs, is their diversity of names, organisational positions, and formats (Gosling, 2008:16). Gosling's earlier longitudinal studies of EDUs (2001, 2006a, 2006b) showed that their activities can include such variations as: the encouragement of innovation in teaching and learning, implementation of institutional teaching and learning strategies; providing professional development for staff; support for students; promoting the use of learning technologies; and carrying out research into teaching and learning. In many cases these responsibilities are shared with others in the institution, and the

extent to which different units engage in them is somewhat variable. Gosling's research also indicated that EDUs may also be involved in attempts to influence institutional policy with regard to teaching. There is also evidence in the same study that units work to improve the student learning environment, for example, by providing support to colleagues who support teaching, such as librarians and careers advisers, and even to work towards the development of appropriate learning spaces. A separate, if now dated, case study of an individual unit also illustrates this variety in that,

> *its core activities include consultation services (teaching, curriculum, quality assessment support,), academic staff development programmes, a resource library, dissemination of good practice, (for example a newsletter), proposal and policy development, educational research and a learning technology centre. Additionally the unit supports the university's process for students' evaluation of teaching* (Lueddeke, 1997:156)

This variety militates against EDUs taking prescriptive approaches to teaching partly because of the work load for such small units and partly because there is more to creating;

> *an environment in which debate can flourish about what constitutes good practice and how that may vary across different contexts and for different types of students. Learning is not simply more or less effective and teaching is not simply more or less efficient, nor can good practice simply be disseminated (Gosling, 2001:76)*

There is some support for this argument in the work of other scholars, who have examined the problems of educational development activity in the higher education sector. Some argue that 'the organisational forms, academic cultures, and sub cultures within which developers have to practice' (Land 2001:4) are so influential that they have led to a number of different orientations towards academic development, which individual developers may hold according to different circumstances. At the risk of oversimplifying Land's arguments, these orientations can be organised into three broader groups. First, there is an orientation towards "authority", derived from hierarchical organisational structure, the discipline, or notions of professional competence. Secondly, there are what appear to be "personal" orientations, taking advantage of relationships with colleagues, or notions of well

22

being. Finally, they may be "conversational", based on a need to understand how people come to mutually acceptable decisions. (Land, 2004 pp108-16). Land's work is focussed on individual developers, rather than on development units, but these kind of orientations can be seen in the work of others who have written about the EDU.

Harland and Staniforth (2008), for example, argued that this diversity has become accepted by those working in the field of educational development, and as a result the organisation and work of that field has fragmented. They drew attention to tension between an 'institutionally focussed service model that could be everything to everyone and one that could be distinguished as more conventionally academic with theoretical knowledge as the basis for practice' (p.669). Their argument echoes Land's orientations towards the disciplines, implying that academic development could become more widely accepted if developers engaged in what they describe as research led teaching, where developers used their research knowledge and experiences of academic life to underpin practice. This sounds an attractive notion, but it is difficult to see how this might be done, given the relatively small size of units, which usually contain about 8-10 staff (Gosling, 2008:19) and the demands made by the sort of everyday activities described by Lueddeke (1997) above. It is also possible that this kind of approach may simply not be welcome. As the current author has argued:

> *Educational developers must work with staff within the faculties if they*
> *are to have any effect, which means that they [i.e. EDUs] cannot*
> *realistically present themselves as loci of teaching expertise. Even if*
> *teaching practices within faculties occasionally leave something to be*
> *desired, practitioners are unlikely to respond well to corrective measures*
> *that originate outside their own disciplines. (Beckton, 2009:67)*

How then does an EDU work within a contemporary university to bring about change? Blackmore and Blackwell, (2006) argue that leaders of EDUs may find themselves mediating between the realities of institutional life, on the one hand, and the beliefs and values of faculty on the other because academic work is becoming increasingly managed, less autonomous, more pressured, and less secure. This has resulted in a variety of professionalizing initiatives relating to these changes and they argue that EDUs have a role in assisting faculties to manage this kind of change. An earlier study of heads of EDUs, found a sense among them of an ethical

> *desired state which often conflicts with realities of everyday life and the difficulty of balancing the perception of "seeing oneself as an agent in the implementation of university policy and the clarity with which one sees problems. (Blackmore and Wilson, 2005:115)*

There was a need to balance management demands with the needs of other constituents. They had to do more than satisfy management to carry others with them. What those working in EDUs deem relevant, they argue, must be informed by values and understandings held by the developer about the nature and purpose of the university. There is a sense here that prescriptive change, based on an external narrative or model of educational development, is difficult to achieve.

Studies have been conducted which provide a basis on which it might be possible to begin to form models of development units. One such asked those working in them to provide a series of imaginative metaphors for their work. The answers suggested a lack of confidence among EDU staff about the value their institution placed upon their work, along with uncertainty about the exact nature of their role. Among the suggestions were;

> *a Chinese laundry going with implacable courtesy about the task of taking in, for a carefully calculated financial fee, the dirty washing of others? Or a conscript army going over the top in pursuit of a thinly understood policy determined away from the front by the generals and not allowed to ask any questions... (or) like the support riders in the Tour de France) whose task is to help the potential winners escape the* peloton *and in serving as* domestiques *will occasionally be asked to take some of the burdens of pace setting themselves. Serving the servers of the learners, such functionaries will never be able to count themselves among the winners* (Jenkins *et al*, 2000:25).

Educational development appears from this, to be perceived by those engaging in it as being an under appreciated activity. The extract offers some support for a model of a development unit as a change agent, albeit not a very successful one.

The study of the orientations towards educational development referred to above (Land, 2004), is further support for the argument that there is some uncertainty about the purpose of educational development activity. Land's study illustrates why a model

of the EDU may be useful. He concludes that educational development can be categorised as a modernist project associated with benign ideas of change even though he acknowledges that:

> *There can be no definitive valorised approach to effective practice as chosen strategies must be appropriate to, and are to considerable extent determined by, specific operational context and terrain.* (Land, 2004:191)

He argues that the term "development" is laden with meaning, and suggests that many of the respondents in his own study thought about their practice in what he described as a "modernist" context, equating change with progress and logically therefore, equating change with "innovation". "Innovation" is also a highly value loaded term and not necessarily always beneficial. (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005:139). If so, then any model of how EDUs bring about change must address the values that underpin the concept of innovation, and map the "specific operational context and terrain".

One aspect of innovation that does appear to be a principal responsibility of EDUs is the introduction of new technology into university teaching. (Gosling, 2008:14; Jamieson, 2003:123). There are those who argue that technology has had a profound effect on the way universities are structured, for example Conole et al believe that:

> *"Job titles and structural units within support services have been in a constant state of flux in the last few decades as institutions struggle to keep up with the impact of changing technologies and try to introduce appropriate structures and roles to provide support for teaching and research activities within the institution.* (Conole *et al*, 2007:77)

This implies that EDUs may have been created to take on this role in the absence of anyone else able to do so. Others have pointed out that this is a significant role as internet based technologies are basically communicative. Because communication is at the heart of educational interaction, these are not like past technologies that could be quietly incorporated or rejected, but instead 'force a complete reconceptualisation of the learning and teaching transaction' (Garrison and Anderson, 2003:3). If so, EDUs are responsible for bringing about change in a fundamental aspect of the work of the university, the teaching that goes on in it.

Thus, the generic literature on EDUs could be summarised as indicating that there exists a level of uncertainty about their role, and that they themselves are not entirely certain of what is expected of them. The work of Gosling (2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2008) and Lueddeke (1997) shows that they engage in a great deal of activity, and also that their priorities have changed over the past decade. This may be related to the changing context in which they are working, as suggested by Land (2004), Blackmore and Wilson (2005) and Blackmore and Blackwell (2006). The result of these changes is that the field of educational development has become somewhat fragmented (Harland and Staniforth, 2008:65), and has lost focus (Jenkins et. al., 2000). The process of fragmentation has been accelerated by the demands of technology (Gosling, 2008; Jamieson, 2003, Conole *et al*, 2007; Garrison and Anderson, 2003).

The studies of the EDU are focussed, reasonably enough, on the teaching enhancement role of the EDU. Few mention the importance of their own discipline to academics, for example. Any model of EDUs that is based solely on studying their activities is unlikely to be able to explain how they interact with their environment, or how they prioritise the things that they do. The next section therefore examines models of the wider university, and attempts to draw out three hypothetical models of the EDU from suggestions in the literature about different conceptualisations of the university. These models are then compared with the data that emerges from the case studies and used to devise a model that incorporates both the activities of the EDU and the institutional context in which they operate.

Developing Models of University Conceptualisations

There is an extensive literature on the idea of the university concerned with its function (Newman, 1852; Readings, 1997; Barnett, 2000a; UNESCO, 2000) or with its organisational structure (McNay, 1995; Booth, 1999). Many of these ideas and values play a part in forming the contestable concepts of improvement and development, which are both inherent in the work of the EDU, and influential in forming the ideas of clients of the unit. Some understanding of at least one idea of the university is essential if those working in development units are to develop a coherent approach to what it is that is being developed, and to what the nature of that

development might look like. The mediaeval model of the university described in Chapter 1 (page 12-13) may be recognisable today but it is an oversimplification to apply it to the modern university, which is in most cases a large and complex organisation, often highly devolved with faculties and departments having considerable local autonomy.

> *The university has come to take on the characteristics of a post–Fordist organisation in which the structures, are much more fluid and uncertain…departments give way to matrix structures in which staff's roles are more ambiguous and multi-faceted* (Barnett, 1997:51).

Organisational culture is a rather nebulous concept. Some universities, for example, see themselves as being loose associations of communities of self-governing scholars (Lomas, 2005:9), but in fact Lomas goes on to quote the work of Clark (1998):

> *…universities that were successful in changing culture were characterised by a concerted effort to innovate and to galvanise all the staff of the university; senior management, academics and administrative staff. There was 'stronger steering' from the centre, with staff responding in a flexible and adaptable manner (Clark, 1998,cited in Lomas, 2005:10)*

That argument suggests a conception of the university as a single, corporate body, more akin to a commercial corporation, than to the fluid structures implied in the quotation from Barnett, (1997) . Other studies suggest that centralised structures are not inherently characteristic of the sector. Instead, the university is characterised as having:

> *Relative lack of co-ordination, a relative absence of regulation, little linkage between the concerns of senior staff and those involved in teaching and learning, a lack of congruence between structure and activity, differences in methods, aims and even missions among different departments, little lateral interdependence among departments, infrequent inspection and the invisibility of much that happens (McNay, 1995:110)*

McNay goes on to suggest that the way universities respond to the problem of multiple localised power centres can be categorised into one of four cultures, collegial, bureaucratic, corporate and enterprising. These are not descriptive models that portray any individual university but rather they indicate that a university may display some aspects of these cultures at different times, and this in turn is influenced

by what are its current priorities. EDUs appear to fit McNay's collegial culture since they are trying to bring groups of staff with disparate, albeit loosely connected aims together, while allowing more scope for local determination of how strategy should be implemented. The other three cultures appear to suggest that EDUs would fit better into a managerialist environment (Deem, 1998), a term McNay does not use. In a managerialist environment, the EDU is likely to act on behalf of senior management to bring about change to the practices of the rest of the university, what Land (2004) refers to as a 'domestic' agenda.

The term "university" is of some significance for this study as it is sometimes taken to refer to the universal character of university education (Barnett, 2000a:72) but university education was, and arguably is, far from being "universal". It is a function of EDUs to enhance teaching, but many academics base their professional identity around a combination of teaching and research (Deem, 2006:284), making it hard for those outside an academic discipline to challenge the practices of those inside it. For many of their colleagues the enhancement of teaching may sometimes take second place to the demands of research. The number of students who have been admitted to university has also been restricted. Even the commitment of the UK Government to a significant widening of access to universities, is limited to extending university education to 50% of the population. (Dept. for Education and Skills, 2003).

It is not only access that is restricted. One can plausibly argue that the purpose of university teaching is restricted. A significant aspect of state policy is the continuing attempt to integrate "business practices" into the public sector, an approach revealed in a variety of white papers, policy documents and government reports relating to higher education (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997; Dept. for Education and Skills., 2003; Department of Business Innovation and Skills, 2009). In short teaching should have an instrumental function which should be expressible as a quantifiable economic value, although this is not a view widely accepted within the sector, either in the UK, or other countries (Kirp, 2000). If the University is not perceived as a universal good, but instead as a service meeting a specific need, then it follows that it will need to be able to reassure funders that it is able to define and meet targets deemed appropriate for that service.

Change agents

The conceptualisation of the university as a service provider is likely to place some pressure on senior management to meet external objectives. Thus EDU staff could also see themselves as persuaders, working to change the teaching practices of academic staff so that the university achieves external objectives. Where this approach has been tried, it does not seem to have been particularly successful. Gray and Radloff (2006) writing from an Australian perspective record that:

> *Our goal of quality management of academic development work is to ensure high standards and to keep such work on the change agenda for universities so that we are able, ultimately, to contribute effectively to improving learning. However, the suspicion that some of our stakeholders have of the 'quality agenda' and of associated strategies to manage and ensure the quality of student learning, has made it difficult to gain their endorsement of the quality management framework we have adopted. (Gray and Radloff, 2006; 87-88)*

Furthermore attempts at setting standards on university teaching have recognised the difficulty of imposing quality on a diverse group of professionals. For example, the UK Higher Education academy produced a Professional Standards Framework for university teaching which fell some way short of setting actual standards for teaching. Instead, it was designed to act rather as "An enabling mechanism to support the professional development of staff engaged in supporting learning" (Higher Education Academy, 2006:2). Elsewhere, there are powerful examples of scepticism about educational development, which tend to link educational development with managerial imperatives, as evidenced by an academic who saw 'these courses as a form of indoctrination and…[was] clearly horrified by the "philistine…crusade to turn academics into trained teachers" '(Furedi, 2004, quoted in McLean, 2006:143). Such apparent philistinism was equated with technical-rational constructions of teaching and critically described as messages to new teachers that:

> *We should not be telling our students things, we should be 'managing their learning' and enabling them to develop 'transferable skills';. This is a matter of technique and procedure; who the teacher is, what s/he knows and what s/he cares about are or should be unimportant (Cameron, 2003, quoted in* McLean, 2006, 143-4)

Academic staff may be reluctant to attend development events, because centrally run events tend to be removed from the primary discourse communities of the staff who attend them (Knight, 2002, quoted in Sharpe, 2004), and placed instead in a discourse that characterises higher education as failing to meet consumer, that is student, need. One solution to this that is sometimes advocated, is that educational development should become more research led, in effect, that units should become much more like academic departments, because as currently constituted they are neither expressions of a profession, or a discipline. (Harland and Staniforth, 2008:669). Hence rather than endeavouring to bring about a quantitatively measurable enhancement in teaching and learning, units should attempt to

> *...make academics (by) letting them be academics in their own ways. To do this requires a turning of the tables, the surrendering of resources, power, control and the establishment of a kind of trust in the human creative processes in the community. This is counter cultural work in that it goes directly against the grain of bolt on training and skills course*
> (Phipps, 2005:145)

This "counter cultural work" explains why conceptualising EDUs as a change agent that imposes normative models of teaching on colleagues may be unhelpful. Yet there are areas, technology being one example, where guidance on aspects of practice may be helpful. There will be an expectation that training will be provided in, for example e-learning (Pannan and McGovern, 2003:398). The EDU, in its role as a locus of technical innovation, would logically be expected to provide those workshops, but as Phipps implies above, will still need to take some account of disciplinary culture. In this context the unit needs to show not only that it has persuaded colleagues to change their practices, but that such changes have improved student learning. "Bolt on training" is not precluded, but it is unlikely to be enough to achieve this. Furthermore in a managerial environment, decisions about what is important are often derived from attempts to produce a quantitative analysis of what is needed, such as the National Student Survey, or at a more local level, evaluations of courses based on student feedback. Brew, (2006:75) argues that the increasing location of the work of educational developers within this type of institutional quality assurance framework aligns them much more with central management of the university, and by implication reduces their ability to work collegially with academics.

There is some evidence that those working in faculties associate the EDU with the centre, that is the senior management, of the university. Clegg, (2003), for example, draws attention to the attitude of one of her interviewees who stated:

> "He designated the LTA co-ordinator role (i.e. his own) as being the LTI (the central educational development unit) person in order to distance it from his own school identity (Clegg, 2003:809)

The implication is that for many teaching staff, even if they have, as in this case,a formal educational development role, it is still not seen as part of the major academic enterprise. Essentially the centre is still seen as "other", even where there appears to be a stronger collegial culture.

> "The idea of the pragmatic emerged through a series of dualities, all of which asserted the significance of local practical wisdom as against policy and theoretical knowledge in the centre."(Clegg, 2003:810)

If so, those working in EDUs may find it difficult to disassociate themselves from a centralised view of the university, unless they interact regularly with the sources of "local practical wisdom", and act in a collegial fashion, building a bridge between the faculties and the centre. Clegg's case study is of a single institution, and as she acknowledges, generalising from a single case is not without risk, but there is support for her view elsewhere. Others have been making similar arguments for some time, for example (Gibbs, 1996). Clegg's data illustrate the importance of working with faculties for EDUs, because faculty roles are in a state of considerable flux and teaching staff report feeling increasingly managed, less autonomous, more pressured and less secure. (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2006).

Academics are sometimes critical of managerial culture, but there are instances where the literature does suggest it has some value, and that in fact:

> academics are reasonably comfortable working within managerialist regimes, and that they are instrumental in sustaining them (Kolsaker, 2008: 522)

 One such instance is the EDU's role in providing support for an institutional virtual learning environment or VLE. The purchase of a VLE and its implementation are

highly strategic decisions, which need to be supported by focussing on the pedagogical need of those who use the system (Beastall and Walker, 2007:288). Usually the senior management of the university is anxious to see a return on its investment, and the EDU is likely to receive considerable support in providing development activities with regard to the VLE. Nevertheless the role of the EDU is primarily to provide training and help-desk services to academic colleagues (Beckton, 2009:64), rather than to participate in choices about which VLE should be used. If the EDU tries to take an overly normative approach to technology it may find that it is simply ignored as the affordances of technology shift, from content delivery, to networking and discussion, where information becomes less something to organise, but something to discuss, negotiate and debate Uys and Campbell, (2005:660).

There is some evidence that EDUs themselves tend to follow traditional methods, using technology to print handouts, produce PowerPoint presentations, delivered in class-like workshops. In this kind of approach "success is simply assumed, unless there has been a technical impediment to the delivery of the information" (Kandlbinder, 2003:138). This more traditional kind of pedagogy chimes very well with what might be described as a "corporate" structure as described by McNay, (1995) above. It is easy to quantify how many development sessions have been run, or whether PowerPoint slides are available on the virtual learning environment. Whether anyone has learnt anything, or made any change in their working practice is more difficult to establish, especially as that kind of change is only likely to manifest itself over a longer term.

Developing from the literature pointing to EDUs as change agents Figure 2.1 has been produced to illustrate how this conceptualisation, if associated with a model of change that relies on external sources of authority, may risk marginalising the academic community that ought to be at the heart of the university. If metrics of change such as higher league table positions, or the number of academics who are using the virtual learning environment are the primary concern of the EDU, then it simply needs to persuade enough members of the academic community to use the VLE, to collect evaluations of their courses, or to participate in development workshops to satisfy any targets that might have been set. While these things must have some influence on the academic community, the level of engagement with them

need not be more than superficial. There is certainly no clear mechanism by which the quality of teaching might be enhanced.
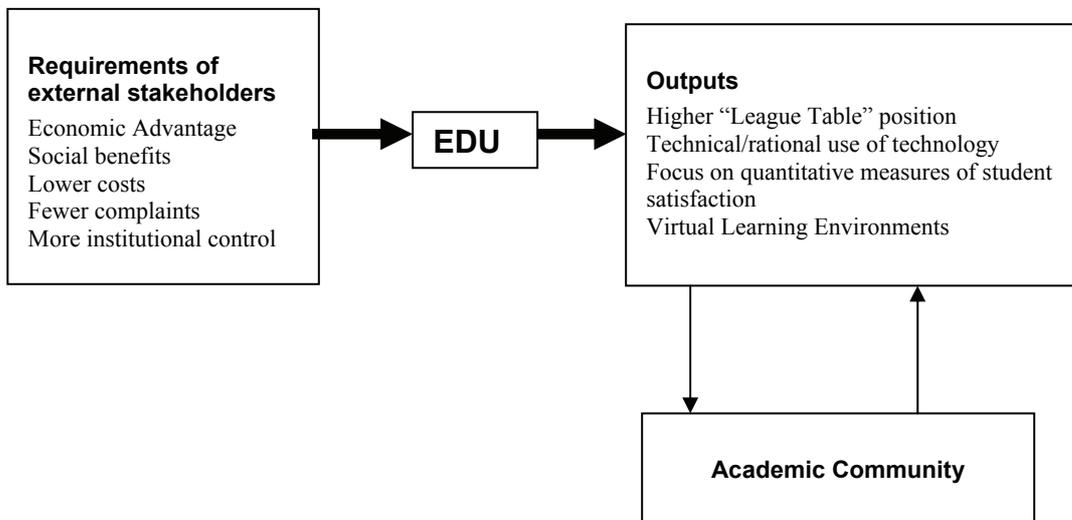
Fig 2:1. The EDU as a change agent

The literature then suggests that EDUs taking a normative approach to change will struggle to achieve their aim of enhancing the quality of teaching. The most likely response from colleagues is apathy, or resistance. Figure 2:1 summarises the risks inherent in this model, which are that the EDU fails to engage with the academic community, except on the most superficial level. The weight of the arrows in the illustration indicates the levels of interaction between the different groups. Cameron's comment on pp29-30 above illustrates that simple authority, whether derived from authoritative research or government targets, is not enough to effect change in an academic environment. EDUs may be better to take a "collegial" approach, respecting the freedom of departments and individual members of staff to operate beyond the constraints of the organisation that employs them. (Kinman and Jones, 2004:10).

Collegiality

The debate about the purpose of the university, and how it is to achieve that purpose is not new. In the nineteenth century Newman argued that the proper function of a university is to train the mind so that the graduate can deal with the unpredictability of working life, and it is this distinction which separates this model from the change agent model described above.

If then a university is a direct preparation for this world, let it be what it professes. It is not a convent; it is not a seminary; it is a place to fit men (sic) of the world for the world. We cannot possibly keep them from plunging into the world, with all its ways and principles and maxims, when their time comes; but we can prepare them against what is inevitable; and it is not the way to learn to swim in troubled waters never to have gone into them. (Newman, 1852:232)

Newman argued that the pursuit of a single subject was not, in itself sufficient, for the student to achieve a fully rounded education. This has informed the development of more collegial structures characterised by a high level of autonomy for faculties organised on disciplinary lines. Such autonomy is often tempered by mutual respect and respect for concepts such as academic freedom, even though, as Karran (2007) points out, a clear definition of academic freedom remains elusive. Consequently there has been a growth of an assortment of assumptions, rules, relationships and practices in particular departments or Teaching and Learning Regimes as they have been somewhat disparagingly described (Trowler *et al*, 2005).   The role of the EDU in this environment is likely to be more complex, as it has to deal with what are, in effect, localised power bases, which are unlikely to be receptive to a single narrative of teaching enhancement.

If universities are believed by stakeholders to be failing to deliver quality teaching, then the collegial model appears to be a threat to attempts to remedy this deficiency. This is an important point in discussing the EDU's role in the purpose of the university, because the notion of a deficit model implies that teaching is inadequate, irrespective of the academic discipline. This idea of parity among disciplines appears to be quite a modern development, as Newman remarked:

It is a great point then to enlarge the range of studies which a university professes, even for the sake of the students; and though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those, and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of universal learning, considered as a place of education."(Newman, 1852:101)

Newman is not arguing that disciplines be taught in the same way, but he is suggesting that there is much to be gained from cross disciplinary fertilisation. If so,

EDUs will have little success if they try to impose an external agenda on academic colleagues, but will be more effective if they respect the values of the different academic disciplines.

One example of the way in which this is being done is the Carpe Diem initiative at the University of Leicester (Salmon *et al*, 2008). This involves working with entire departments over two days, first, addressing a department's choice of issues, and secondly, experimenting with potential technological solutions. This aims to overcome resistance by some academic staff to the idea that their teaching needs to be improved; the success of the workshop arises from using social practice theories of change, (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which relies on workgroups developing their own realities, or more accurately absorbing each others' realities and so reducing the 'stickiness' of their own workgroups practice, allowing it to 'leak' to other groups. (Brown & Duguid, 2001)

That kind of approach may minimise the risk identified of higher education being perceived as a private, rather than a public, good in that the benefit from higher education is seen as accruing to the student, not to the state (Deem, 2006). Where departments have articulated their teaching philosophy, they should be able to point out what benefit it offers to society, as well as the individual student. A consequence for teaching of not doing this is likely to be that an institution which over emphasises the conceptualisation of the student as a consumer may develop a managerialist culture. The model of the university as a driver of economic change does not appear to be strongly valued by academic staff, a view not unique to the United Kingdom for Kirp reports that:

> *While the public has been napping, the American university has been busily reinventing itself. In barely a generation, the familiar ethic of scholarship-baldly put, that the central mission of universities is to advance and transmit knowledge-has been largely ousted by the just-in-time, immediate-gratification values of the marketplace. ... Gone. . . is any commitment to maintaining a community of scholars, an intellectual city on a hill free to engage critically with the conventional wisdom of the day. (Kirp 2000)*

The debate seems to be between "knowledge" and "skill"

the old curriculum, centred on those futile seeming subjects, and from the social, political and commercial point of view, obstinately irrelevant had a purpose, the kind of purpose that only the avoidance of purpose can achieve. This purpose was to train the mind (Scruton, 2001:8)

Scruton is sceptical about business studies curricula consisting of what he sees a "hotch-potch of flow charts, book keeping, ethical exhortations and stock market tips" (p8) instead arguing that the student gains from learning how to communicate, compare, and conceptualise abstract facts, arguing that empathy and irony are better training for entering Newman's troubled waters (p35 above) than the acquisition of instrumental knowledge.

Technology presents a problem for units in this kind of environment because it too undermines the shared values of the social system. It is a threat to traditional conceptions of academic practices, exemplified by student complaints about having too few lectures quoted above (p13) because:

> *The transmission model necessarily entails a mediating authority. That is because knowledge received is always subject to distortion and people throughout the ages have naturally made the inference that the distortion can be prevented, or at least diminished by allowing for some privileged interpreter of what is communicated between the source and the recipient* (Raschke, 2003:30).

Raschke goes on to argue that the way the Internet is developing is leading to a sort of social intelligence, or "wisdom of the commons" which could itself provide the source of an entirely new deficit model.

There is some evidence in the literature that EDUs have tried to take more collegial approaches to development, for example through the use of teaching awards modelled on the National Teacher Fellow Scheme (Skelton, 2004). The primary purpose of this approach is to assist individuals with specific development projects, although in many institutions this appears to have been done on a relatively small scale (Morris and Fry, 2006). Such schemes are usually based around project proposals, originating within an academic discipline. Other reports suggest that there are still some managerial aspects to these awards. In some institutions applications were:

evaluated internally by educational development staff and an external
assessor with nationally recognised expertise in learning and teaching
development (Benzies, 2009:60).

suggesting that these schemes may be less collegial than they might at first appear.
The need for an external assessor lends some support to Skelton's (2004) argument
that these schemes are essentially managerial, based as they are on an externally
determined discourse of teaching excellence

Collegiality then presents as much difficulty for EDUs as more normative models.
Guidance from senior management for the EDU in aligning its policies and practices
with institutional missions is not entirely absent in collegial structures, but it is much
less visible. The EDU may try to align itself with the most successful faculties,
departments, or groups, in order to make headway. Land, (2004:7) refers to this type
of culture as "political", and notes that such cultures tend to be characterised by high
levels of conflict, and that "resolution of such internecine strife usually amounts to
political expediency, compromise and short term vision". This presents a threat to
EDUs because their survival depends on the strength of the support they can gather
around them. In contrast, failing to engage with less enthusiastic, or actively resistant
faculties lays the unit open to a charge of failing to deliver what it is charged to do.

Requirements of external stakeholders

Economic Advantage
Social benefits
Lower costs
Fewer complaints
More institutional control

→ **EDU** → **Academic Community**

Outputs

Higher "League Table" position
Virtual Learning Environment
Locally supported projects
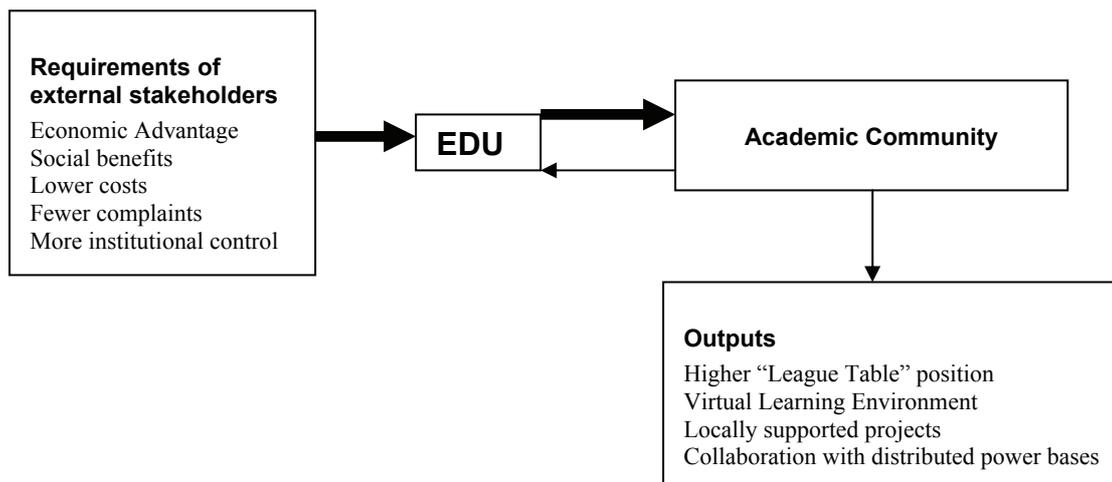Collaboration with distributed power bases

Figure 2:2 Collegially based EDUs

Figure 2:2 has been developed to show how over emphasising their collegial role may undermine the EDUs position as a change agent. The demands of external stakeholders remain the same, but increasing the EDU's interaction with the academic community both weakens and changes its outputs which might make them less valuable to external stakeholders. In attempting to work collaboratively with the academic community the EDU shifts the focus of its work away from the centre and towards local power bases. Characteristic of this model are the sort of award schemes described by Morris and Fry and Benzies, which tend to support an illusion of local control, with power over who receives the awards remaining to some extent in the hands of the centre. In that sense, the EDU's account of what constitutes teaching enhancement is a joint creation between the local practical wisdom of the faculties, policy emanating from outside and the theoretical knowledge held by the EDU itself.

Research and Development

The change agent and collegial models described above are predicated on a deficit model, which presumes that changes to the practice of university teaching need to be made. They are less clear about exactly what those changes need to be. If, as Gosling, Luedekke and others have shown, educational development units are engaged in a variety of activities, then one might expect that there would be evidence in the literature that suggested that they conduct research into these activities. Research has long been regarded as a proper function of the university. Von Humboldt, writing in 1810 argued that knowledge was not something that one went to university to receive, it was something that one went to university to create by working with experts in the field (Hohendorf, 1993). Learning takes place as the student works collaboratively with their teachers. This conceptualisation appears to alter the role of the EDU in relation to curriculum design so that it focuses less on "teaching techniques" or "effective learning", and more on encouraging staff to work with students to produce new knowledge. The student is reinvented as a producer rather than a consumer (Neary & Winn, 2009), engaging in learning that is 'based on discovery guided by mentoring, rather than on the transmission of information' (Dewey, 1938:15).

There is considerable interest in the idea of "research-informed teaching", informed by the idea that the new 'knowledge economy' requires that students graduate with an ability to analyse and to contribute to research' (Jenkins *et al*, 2007:12). In order to achieve this, they argue, it is necessary to regard students as participants, rather than as an "audience". This has much in common with constructivist views of education, in which students work to construct their own learning by participating in learning activities. Scholars have argued that research informed university teaching should regard the student as a joint producer of knowledge rather than as a consumer of research (Biggs, 2003; Salmon, 2005; Neary and Winn, 2009). In contrast, an Australian study suggests that teaching effectiveness and research productivity are nearly uncorrelated (Hattie and Marsh, 1996) and thus that there is a need to devise some way of strengthening the relationship between the two, in effect to create a discourse of research engaged teaching. This is a role that EDUs might reasonably be expected to become involved in for example by shifting the focus of teacher fellowship schemes away from recognition and reward of individuals, to providing funding for joint staff student research projects.

In fact there is a long established debate about the role of the EDU in pedagogical research. Land (2004) identifies a research orientation to development, and there is some evidence that Australian EDUs were originally set up as research units in the 1960s (Moses, 1987). However, in England, the organisational purpose of units does appear to have been primarily concerned with the improvement of teaching, even before the introduction of the TQEF. Nevertheless becoming involved in research does present something of a difficulty for EDUs. First the academic discipline to which individual staff members belong plays a large part in forming their identity as a university lecturer, as Becher and Trowler note:

> *to be admitted to membership of a particular sector of the academic profession involves not only a sufficient level of technical proficiency in one's intellectual trade, but also a proper measure of loyalty to one's collegial group and adherence to its norms* (Becher and Trowler, 2001:47).

Secondly, given the existence of the external pressures on higher education described in chapter 1, and the fact that research is, by definition, at the cutting-edge of a

discipline; "The reality is that for many staff, much of what they teach is rather different from the topics of their research" (Smith, 1999:163). It would be difficult for EDU staff to make much of a contribution to this kind of disciplinary research in one area, and still retain credibility as research experts in others. There is some evidence that a research orientation is starting to be reflected in organisational changes to English EDUs. A paper by Macfarlane & Hughes, (2009) describes how the educational development unit at Thames Valley University has been absorbed into that university's Graduate School. The author's own unit at Lincoln was merged with the postgraduate provider, the International Institute for Educational Leadership, to form a Centre for Educational Research and Development in 2008. A benefit of this approach is that the unit is in a position to make a significant contribution to an emerging narrative of educational development that includes research activity. This would require a more generous definition of research, including activities such as running learned societies, editing journals, and peer reviewing others' work.

Bath and Smith (2004), draw an interesting distinction between "academic developers" and "disciplinary academics", the latter referring to those who teach and research in academic disciplines. They illustrate how the two roles have much in common, although the distinctions depend on particular interpretations of specific terms. Both are involved in teaching, in the sense that both facilitate someone else's learning. Educational developers rarely teach, in the sense of delivering content to a cohort of students, and assessing the students' understanding of that content.

Such a model raises questions about what topics the EDU might research. One answer is likely to be ways in which technology can be used in university teaching, beyond its uses in automating or enhancing familiar tasks. That this is a significant task was made clear by Shephard, (2004) who also noted that the context in which such work was undertaken might affect the rate at which opportunities for technological enhancement were undertaken.

> *Staff implementing an ICT innovation need to undertake a huge amount of*
> *professional development and personal work to make a significant start.*
> *The fact that so many academic staff have not yet made this significant*
> *start might suggest that institutional and government strategies*

> *underestimate the amount of work, development and time commitment*
> *needed* (Shephard, 2004:76).

Shepard's paper is a literature review rather than an empirical research report, but it does suggest educational developers have been too focused on pedagogical theory, or institutional mandates for technological enhancement, rather than with the pragmatic every day concerns of teaching staff in the disciplines. This is a challenge for an EDU that wishes to explore technological affordances. In a podcast in 2009, the Deputy Chairman of the Higher Education Funding Council, implied that a lot of the expansion in funding, and by implication the TQEF had "inevitably led to a degree of hobbyism' (TALIS, 2009: 03'13") , that is projects that, while interesting, could not really demonstrate any practical result in terms of teaching enhancement.

A counter argument is that research into technology in education is essential because technology is profoundly changing the way in which people engage with knowledge with the result that epistemic authority is drifting away from the academy.

> *To date educators in general, and higher education in particular, have*
> *largely resisted the digital onslaught, or savvily co-opted it in a fashion*
> *that so far has absorbed its transformative energy...They have ferociously*
> *resisted the process that has taken hold by now in all other sectors of the*
> *digital society whereby centralised management and top-down authority*
> *is replaced by non-sequential and coactive networks that rely far more on*
> *the efficiency of communication than command and control* (Raschke,
> 2003:4)

The growth of the non-sequential and coactive networks that Raschke describes has accelerated rapidly since his book was published. Wikipedia, (http://wikipedia.org) Facebook, (http://www.facebook.com) Twitter, (http://twitter.com) Second Life, (http://secondlife.com) and the huge growth in blogging, all fit that description, and have all been discussed as having educational potential. (Hughes, A, 2009). EDUs, it is implied, will have to engage with these technologies if they are to remain credible sources of teaching enhancement.

It was suggested above that the EDU may be under some corporate pressure to maximise the use of the VLE given the heavy institutional investment made in it. This places the EDU in the paradoxical position of suggesting that academic

colleagues may be better advised not to use the VLE, but some other technology. Thus, it is essential that the EDU works with academic colleagues to identify their values. Simply providing a technological environment for colleagues and expecting them to conform to its requirements is unlikely to result in enhancement, especially if changes to practice are required (Cornford & Pollock, 2003). Yet, there also has to be a technological environment, and technology above all, has to be reliable: "Technology as ever requires, standardisation, project management and teamwork" (Laurillard, 2002:7). So the role of the EDU is to both push the boundaries of what can be done with technology, while at the same time, support and exploit the existing infrastructure as effectively as possible.

This conceptualisation of technology as having a transmissive function is accentuated when one considers the relationship between the EDU and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is likely that the VLE will have been chosen by IT managers on the basis of an institution wide cost-benefit analysis rather than on any consideration of local learning and teaching practices (Oliver *et al*, 2007:36). There are also suggestions in the literature that institution-owned technologies are problematic because users "often find that the assumptions embodied by these systems about the nature of organisations and the ways in which they operate run counter to existing structures and work practices" (Cornford and Pollock, 2003:82). VLEs, for example, are designed to provide a space in which it is easy for colleagues who are not particularly interested in, or experienced with, information technology to upload and manage content on the web (Cook *et al*, 2007:66). In fact ,VLEs do not appear to have had a significant transformative impact on instructional practice (Browne *et al*, 2006:191). As one study notes

> *…the reality is that e-learning is still marginal in the lives of most academics, with technology being used for little more than acting as content repository or for administrative purposes.* (Conole *et al*, 2004:2)

The implication is that technology is rarely used for doing anything particularly different from what has gone before. Yet technology requires teachers "to rethink not just how they use particular hardware or software, but all of what they do" (Sharpe and Oliver, 2007:49).

If an EDU is able to describe the pedagogical affordances of technology it would seem that it would need to develop a comprehensive understanding of it. Users frequently find new ways to use technologies that were neither designed nor intended by those who installed them (Avolio *et al*, 2001:619). An example is the growth of what is increasingly being described as Web 2.0, and characterised by sites that rely on user generated content, as opposed to the origins of the World Wide Web, which was based on a model of consumption of content (Anderson, 2007; Franklin and van Harmelen, 2007). This is encouraging much more co-operation and collaboration across the higher education sector than was previously possible (Hughes, A. 2009) It is likely that academics will be influenced by students' use of these tools, and there has already been considerable discussion of the pros and cons of adopting them in teaching at a number of different levels (JISC, 2007b).

Besides a thorough understanding of the technology, an EDU therefore needs to develop a working relationship with colleagues, if it is to encourage development that starts from the practice of academic staff who are keen to exploit new technologies, rather than impose it from the centre. (Nimmo and Littlejohn, 2009:50).
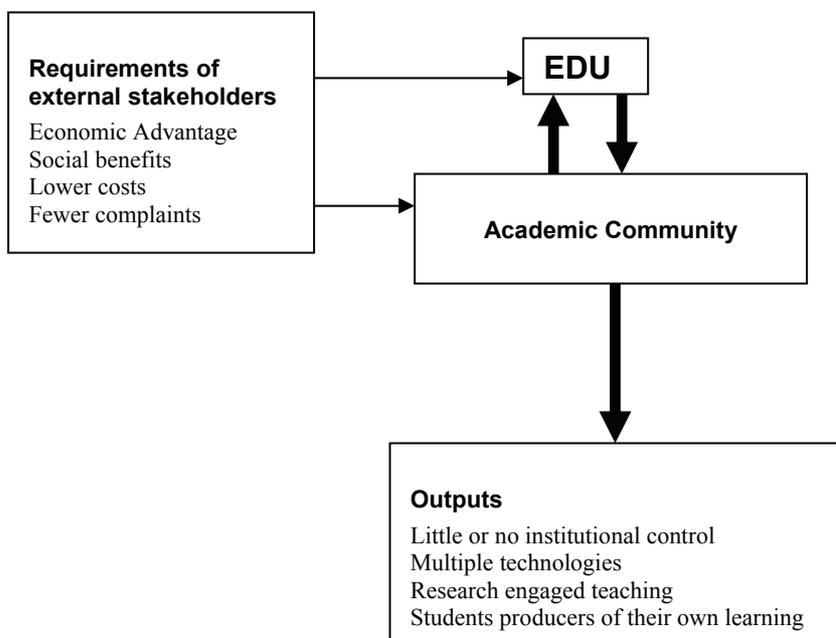
Figure 2:3 The EDU as a Research and & Development unit

43

Figure 2.3 summarises how the literature might suggest a Research and Development Unit model of an EDU . Here, while the external stakeholders' agendas remain the same the real change is that the interaction is between the EDU and the academic community, rather than with the external environment as represented by the senior management of the university. That is not to say that the external environment or the senior management of the university are ignored. Clearly, given the precarious nature of funding for EDUs, such a strategy would be unwise. This model, while it is merely a hypothetical extrapolation from the literature on educational development, the university, and technology, does seem to offer a way in which the EDU can work with the academic community to meet the demands that are being placed on the university. While the outputs of the model are not perhaps as quantifiable as the other two they appear to be compatible with the requirements of external stakeholders.

Conclusion

The literature on EDUs is relatively small. What emerges from the work of Lueddeke, (1997); Jenkins *et al*, (2000) and Gosling, (2001; 2006a; 2006b; 2009), is a sense that development units get involved in a very large range of activities, but seem to lack self–confidence. "Academic developers are still watching their backs and wondering how others perceive them, and how they will continue to work in higher education (Bath & Smith, 2004:10). This is not entirely surprising. EDUs do not have much inherent power, they consume resources, rather than produce resources and, as Land (2004) suggests, they are associated with an interpretation of change that is based on valorised, modernist notions of improvement. There is not always a consensus about what values should inform change. In a managerial culture the EDU may well have the support of the centre, but:

> *Academics as highly educated professionals with a fair degree of autonomy can prove quite adept at resisting or superficially accepting change they do not 'own'. They can also prove to be pretty good at 'playing the game'* (Tight, 2003:113)

Furedi's complaint about 'trained teachers' is evidence of this. Teaching, at least as those outside the academy might define it is not, primarily, what academics do.

What academics do is at the heart of the first research question. "How far do the perceptions of their role, held by staff of EDUs, relate to various models of the university described in the literature?" There are tensions between the 'centre' and the 'local wisdom' as evidenced by Clegg, (2003) and McLean, (2006). It is possible to detect, in Newman's rhetoric about the benefit of students studying several disciplines, a hint of the modular degree schemes that were to be developed in the late twentieth century, allowing undergraduates to pursue several disciplines as part of a degree scheme. These schemes, in an environment where knowledge is marketised and commodified, tend to shift the balance of power away from the discipline and towards the centre, as students are led to expect parity of teaching in all their disciplines. In order to research how EDUs manage these tensions, it is important to ask questions about how they interact with academic colleagues, and what their own perceptions of a university might be.

Whatever perceptions an EDU might hold it is also undeniable that is itself a part of the university. This might promote a more 'collegial' approach, as the EDU tries to work with departments or faculties to help them achieve what they want to do, while at the same time raising awareness of external demands. This will bring them into contact with the teaching and learning regimes described by Trowler et. al. (2005) which, in practice, are likely to have more power than the "centre" and perhaps be less amenable to receiving approaches from an EDU bringing suggestions for improving its working practices. This is the reason for asking the second research question. If the EDUs conceptualisation of university teaching is derived from its interactions with those regimes, as opposed to pedagogical theory, then it will be hard to change the practice of those regimes.

The EDU as a locus of technological innovation is a theme that emerges very strongly from the literature (Lueddeke, 1997; Gosling, 2001; Kandlbinder, 2003; Shephard, 2004; Gosling, 2006a; Gosling, 2006b; Gosling, 2008). Furthermore, the literature strongly suggests that technology has the potential to exert a great deal of normative control over what teachers do, as opposed to increasing their freedom to act. Virtual learning environments impose a particular way of working and thinking on the teaching and learning environment. It might be argued that, in offering tools that pre-package learning, they underpin the commodification of higher education. In contrast,

there has been a growth of personal tools (sometimes characterised as Web 2.0, or Social tools), whose potential to create personalised learning environments (Wilson *et al*, n.d.) and which lie outside institutional control, and thus shift power from the centre to the individual academic. These developments suggest that the academic environment of the Twenty-first Century may be very different from that of the second half of the Twentieth. The last research question, how do EDUs approach the development of colleagues with respect to the introduction of technology into their teaching, is therefore crucial to understanding how the EDU relates to the rest of the university.

The vulnerability of the EDU to financial restrictions was discussed in chapter one. The literature provides evidence that EDUs are involved a wide range of activities, many of which are of value to the university. At the same time, there is evidence that hints at something of a lack of self confidence among EDUs, which raises questions about what story they can tell to funders. Are the institutional models discussed in this chapter, (the 'change agent', the 'college' and the 'research and development unit') an accurate picture, or would a combination of all three better reflect reality? An empirical study of existing EDUs would add to our knowledge of whether one of these, or some other model, might be more appropriate. The following chapter describes the research process that was undertaken in order to investigate this. It discusses the variety of approaches that might be taken to investigating this question, both in terms of gathering data and analysing it, and makes a case for a multiple case study design as the most effective and pragmatic way of doing so.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This study originated in a perception that EDUs units struggle to articulate a narrative of what they are trying to do, reducing their credibility with academic colleagues. The previous chapters argued that the community which the university serves is undergoing significant social and technological change and that, if the university is to serve that community, it too is under some pressure to change. The literature suggests that normative models in which EDUs attempt to impose change on faculties, risk distancing them from faculties, while models in which EDUs work more closely with faculties imply that the EDU's agenda may become driven by the faculties. A third model, borrowing from Humboldtian conceptions of research engaged teaching suggests that the EDU may be able to enhance teaching through promoting the integration of new technologies into teaching, albeit at the risk of failing to address other aspects of teaching practice. These are theoretical constructs of how an EDU might see itself and are derived from the literature, rather than from an empirical analysis on which this thesis is based. This chapter describes the rationale for, and process of carrying out, that analysis.

A multiple case study approach was thought to be the most effective approach to this enquiry, given the diversity of units that might be described as EDUs. In order to identify cases a set of criteria were developed based on the working definition described in chapter 1, (p.3-4 above) itself based on the activities described in Gosling's longitudinal study, which is the most detailed and comprehensive study of the activities in which UK EDUs in the UK are engaging (Gosling, 2001, 2006a, 2006b). The web sites of the units listed in table 1.1. and Appendix A were visited and a shortlist based on those criteria was drawn up. These units were contacted, seeking permission to visit them, and conduct an interview with at least one member of staff. Six eventually agreed to my visit although one subsequently withdrew, and one was disbanded after Appendix A was compiled. However, members of staff who had been employed in that unit agreed to participate. As they would be able to supply data on the problems faced by the unit when it did exist, and the story of its

disbandment would help to shed further light on the unit's role in its organisational context, this offer was accepted.

With more than one case to examine, parallel interviewing was selected to provide ample comparative data to prevent analysis of the first interviews affecting the interviewer's attitudes in the later interviews. A further advantage was that this would avoid having to repeat interviews so that any new questions arising could be discussed with early participants. All five universities were visited, photographs taken and field notes made at each site, materials produced by the units were collected and interviews with staff conducted. The interviews were recorded and transcribed within 48 hours of the interviews taking place. To minimise the risk of the transcriptions affecting questions in later interviews a semi-structured interview schedule was devised (Appendix B). This data was then coded into a number of themes using Nvivo 8 software. These themes were based on those identified in the literature review, and on new categories which emerged from the interviews and field notes. This data is presented in detail in chapter 4

Research paradigm

The philosophical position taken in this study is essentially interpretivist, since senior managers, acdemics, those employed in EDUs, students and educational researchers are likely to have differing views on EDUs. As the discussion of the literature in chapter 2 showed, there are multiple conceptualisations of the university, and staff in EDUs are undertaking a very wide variety of roles in order to address perceived deficits in these conceptualisations. Therefore development is itself a highly contested notion, because different stakeholders hold different values, not only about what is being developed, but about how best to develop it. A problem for interpretivist research is that the researcher may find it difficult to remain neutral, giving in to the temptation to ask leading questions, or unconsciously taking for granted certain aspects of the research environment (Becker, 1967). The approach taken here is first to be as open as possible about my own perspectives, hence the value statement in chapter 1. Second, the advice to encourage participants to talk about an idea and ground any theory that emerges in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1999), has been

followed, with some modification. The modification is necessary because a criticism of that approach is that a researcher inevitably brings a theoretical perspective to the environment, whether formed by reading the literature, or as a result of their own professional experience. In this study the researcher himself works in an EDU, and so may well share the perspective of at least some of the participants. That does not preclude the possibility new concepts may emerge from the data.

There is also an epistemological difficulty with the interpretive paradigm in that:

> *Knowledge is not some ontological substance that lies in people's heads or in the pages of textbooks waiting to be actualised through cognitive processes. Instead, and consistent with our relational and situated perspective it is a term that delineates a person's potential to act in a certain fashion (Barab et al, 2000, quoted in Jackson, 2004: 398)*

The perceptions formed by those who work in organisations, by those who fund them, and by those who use their services, are what constitute reality for organisations (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Logically that is also true of EDUs. That may seem to present a challenge for an interpretative researcher, but there are many shared features of the social world that do allow the gathering of empirical evidence which permits reasonable assumptions to be made, and any search for truth does need to take these into account. "Money, property, government, football games and cocktail parties are what they are, in large part because that's what we think they are" (Searle, 2004:6). It is not unreasonable to add "EDUs" to Searle's list.

Searle's phrase "What we think they are" conceals a powerful objection to the approach described above. Who exactly are 'we'? Research in the positivist and interpretivist traditions has been criticised as operating within frameworks that are restrictive or oppressive in some sense. Research is always conducted inside a framework of social reality that guides the participants' behaviour, even if they are unaware of it. The previous chapters have argued for the existence of deficit model of higher education held by powerful groups, for example, civil servants with responsibility for education policy, or senior managers of institutions who want higher education to deliver something that it is currently failing to deliver. The result is that EDUs, are forced to act to 'improve', not because of explicit threats of adverse

consequences if they fail to do so, but because a language, or discourse, of "improvement" has become so widely accepted that it does not occur to anyone to question it. The challenge for an EDU in this kind of environment may be to develop a new language in which to express a more emancipatory model of educational development. The source of that language is likely to be found in the activity that is going on inside units, rather than imposed on them from outside, for example through the "research & development" model suggested in chapter two.

This approach to research, the critical theory paradigm, is based on a belief that social contexts, whether they be language, cultural values, or even the physical geography of a workplace, exercise subtle, and not always visible, control over the actors in social situations. This study therefore considers the institutional context of the EDU as well as the activities of the unit itself. Critical theory does have an emancipatory agenda, in that it seeks to liberate actors from constraints they may not even be aware of, but it follows from that that the researcher must articulate his or her own values as part of the research process. One cannot reasonably claim to argue for the emancipation of others without some understanding of what one means by emancipation. This raises a problem with reliability and validity because:

> *If critical approaches are essentially political programmes, the researcher may be justified in ignoring the strict evidential bases of the claims they are making. In terms of emphasis, the political project takes precedence over the careful citing and collecting of evidence and data (Scott and Morrison, 2005:49)*

This argument also raises the possibility that the researcher may unconsciously prioritise the political project over what is revealed by the evidence. If a researcher feels strongly about an issue they may simply miss, or disregard, a piece of contradictory evidence because its significance simply does not occur to them. Bearing that in mind, this research is informed by a critical interpretative paradigm, largely based on what participants say, and observation of their working environments, tempered by a critical perspective brought from the researcher's own experience. Readers of the research should therefore bear in mind the researcher's own background set out in the value statement in chapter 1. (pp.14-16)

Research Questions and the Research Paradigms

The reason for asking about the relationship between EDU staff's perception of their roles and the hypothetical models of the university derived from the literature is primarily to identify how their understanding of their roles informs their own narratives of educational development. An interpretative approach to this question will allow participants to articulate that understanding. This data can then be used to build a description of the context in which the participants believe they are operating. There are inevitably elements of uncertainty and the possibility of contradictions and internal inconsistencies in any interpretivist study (Denscombe 2003, p22, quoted Grix, 2004:p83). While no claim can be made to generalisability, at least in the sense that a positivist would understand it, it can be shown that there is enough evidence that a belief in the existence of a particular model of EDUs is warranted, or is an "institutional fact" (Searle, 1995:1-2). Such "facts" can become oppressive without appropriate critical scrutiny. It is an institutional fact that there are multiple orientations to educational development, but these are often generated by the context in which an individual developer is working (Land, 2004). What this study tries to do is to identify the institutional facts that drive development units' narratives of their own professional practice, and from those extrapolate a model that demonstrates how EDUs interact with their host institution to bring about change.

Furthermore, by allowing, as far as possible, participants to give their own views, there is less chance that the study becomes more of an analysis of the researcher's own views on the topic than a description of what is happening in the situation being researched. There is some framing of the context in the interview schedule, but this is much less pronounced than in other methods of data gathering such as a questionnaire. Rather than trying to say that those working in EDUs hold this or that set of models of the university, criteria such as plausibility, authenticity, credibility and relevance are used to determine the validity of the findings. In this case, the variety of roles that educational developers believe they play may prove helpful to others by providing a perspective on their practice that they had not previously considered. However, to do so the findings would have to be recognisable to other practitioners, (plausible), set in a context they recognise (authentic), and echo at least some features of their own practice (credible and relevant).

51

A critical interpretative approach has also been chosen for investigating how those working in EDUs conceptualise university teaching, because participants need to set out what they have done to enhance teaching if they are to account for why they chose one particular method, or set of practices, over another. At the same time, the researcher is able to develop a more critical analysis by drawing attention to the context in which they are working, something that may be invisible to them, or that they may have come to take for granted. By discussing their working environment with a researcher, they may become aware of the context, or the researcher may be able to highlight it during the data analysis phase. Positivist researchers might object that it ought to be possible to test the effectiveness of different practices through controlled experimentation, but in practice it is difficult to identify discrete variables that can be controlled for, rendering any findings invalid.

There is an even greater need for criticality in investigating how EDU staff approach academic colleagues in the light of their own understandings of the potential of technology. Technological enhancement might itself be described as a meta-narrative (Lyotard, 1984). which in seeking to provide universal explanations and in some cases prescriptions for actions, excludes individual, minority or otherwise unprivileged voices. EDU staff who have had some experience of introducing technologies to their academic colleagues, will have developed an understanding of this phenomenon which will inform their practices. An appropriate approach to researching this question, would be to allow participants to explain their choices, and to allow the researcher to question their interpretations. Evidence might be provided by the extent to which the unit worked to meet the needs of particular individuals in relation to technology, as opposed to the extent to which it provided support for corporate technologies, that is, those provided by the institution.

Methodologies

The literature review in chapter 2 showed that EDUs face a challenge in promoting development activity that both respects demands for enhanced teaching and the values of the 'academic tribes'. Given the difficulty of measuring values and the diversity of form and structure among EDUs., it is unsurprising that there were no quantitative

studies discovered during the literature search. In the absence of clearly defined variables, the best method of researching the phenomenon may be to conduct a series of case studies of individual units. The case study is best described as:

> *An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident* (Yin, 1994:13)

Clearly, the activities of an EDU can not be separated from its organisational context. The institution's teaching and learning strategy, the institutional attitude to e-learning, and the day-to-day interaction with teaching colleagues will affect the way in which the staff of an EDU make decisions. There is no clear boundary between 'educational development', 'staff development' and 'institutional policy' making for example. Questions arise here about whose values are dominant and why, and are best answered by examining a number cases in detail. Answers found through case studies have the virtue of authenticity, and thus contribute to the building of an accurate model of the EDU.

Case studies can, and do, use a variety of data collection approaches, and in this case the semi-structured interview was chosen as the principal method, because the research question is about participants' perceptions of the organisational context in which they operate and the extent to which it determines their actions. An overly structured data collection format runs the risk of privileging the researcher's voice to the disadvantage of the participants. The interview method does have some limitations, but so do other methods. Documents may be studied, but are written with a specific audience in mind. Practices may be observed but the researcher cannot know with any certainty the extent to which their own presence had any influence on what was being observed, and may learn more by asking why things are done in a particular way. It is entirely possible that other, unanticipated data sources may be discovered in the course of the research. The case study thus provides an opportunity to triangulate findings from different data sources, hence strengthening the reliability of the findings.

This study uses the idea of empirical generalisation (Gomm *et al*, 2000) to make some suggestions about the framework in which EDUs are operating. Empirical generalisation requires that the degree to which the cases studied are typical of the larger population is carefully considered. The objection that it is still possible to select unrepresentative cases is still valid but, by giving more thought to the characteristics of the target population, a researcher reduces the chance of that happening. Ideally, an investigation into a phenomenon as complex as EDUs would be a longitudinal study, possibly conducted by different researchers. Limitations of time and space preclude such an approach here, but as further studies are conducted, a more substantial body of information about the target population will develop, along with a larger theoretical base from which inferences can be drawn.

Ethics

Before discussing the choice of case studies and data analysis strategies that were used in the thesis it is important to raise some concerns about ethics relating to research into EDUs. There is a clear principle that undermines all research; that is to endeavour to "do no harm". There is some risk of doing harm in researching this topic. EDUs are unusually vulnerable to re-organisation, and that this often has severe consequences. As Gosling points out:

> *"The continuing threat of re-organisation tends to create a sense of marginalisation and demoralisation among EDU staff."*(Gosling, 2008:2)

There is thus a risk that the research could undermine the work that the units being studied are engaged in, and worse, participants' posts could conceivably be put at risk, by the publication of a case study report that showed that the unit was not working in a way that matched the priorities of an institution's senior management. This is an issue because a researcher's first priority is to answer their own research questions, rather than to meet the priorities of participants or their employers. In consequence, the researcher has a duty to take all steps possible to diminish the risk of adverse consequences arising from the research, and the steps taken to do so are detailed below. A counter argument is that the research may have positive effects, which one would hope is the aim of all researchers. The end of the TQEF has already put EDUs

54

at some risk, and in this case the research may assist in showing a way forward for them.

The case studies here, therefore, have been anonymised with a single letter although, even if absolute anonymity could be guaranteed, there will still be situations that are unique to individual cases, which may make them recognisable to people who work in them, or to outsiders familiar with the case. To minimise this risk, participants were advised of the likely threats to anonymity, all interview transcripts were confirmed with the participants, and it was made clear to all participants that they were at liberty to withdraw at any stage. This also helps ensure the validity of any findings, in that participants can help to correct any misinterpretations that might arise from the researcher's own assumptions. Participants were also reassured that they would be consulted, if it was proposed to publish any part of the findings related to them. Anonymised case studies also suffer from the disadvantage that a fictitious name or a single letter may not be as authentic as a real institution in the reader's mind. All participants were asked to sign a consent form, (appendix C) which set out the purposes of the research, explained their right to withdraw at any time, and described how the research would be used.

Selection of case studies

The target population from which the cases in this study are drawn are EDUs in universities in England. Other studies into units have been conducted through sending questionnaires to institutions, (e.g Gosling, 2008) or have been studies by a developer of the unit in which they were working (e.g. Lueddeke, 1997). This is an approach that has led to a valuable description of what EDUs are doing. Combined with the author's own experience of working in an EDU, and the review of all the EDU web sites, listed in appendix A, the data can be used to describe a typical EDU. This can then facilitate empirical generalisation, where the cases studied are representative of the target population. That population was identified by searching the web sites of English universities for units that might be described as EDUs, that is, units that were engaged in the activities listed below:

- Staff development.

- Research into teaching.

- Technological innovation.

- Teaching awards.

- Widening Participation.

- Student Retention.

- Personal Development Planning.

- Quality Assurance.

- Business Links.

- International Activity.

It is unlikely that all EDUs would have an identical portfolio, so it was decided to select units which were involved in at least three of the activities listed. This was felt to be sufficient to identify them as engaging in academic development, without specialising in any one activity. Six cases were chosen in order to investigate the extent to which any different practices might be demonstrated and if so, if this was related to their differing types of universities. While multiple case study designs like this can be complex, (Yin, 2003:87) this complexity was thought worthwhile in order to offer sufficient evidence of how EDUs operated inside the different contexts of their host organisations. Initially, attempts to contact units were not very successful, either meeting with outright rejection or no response. The first approach was by letter, as an e-mail or a phone call was felt to be too informal and furthermore, a letter provided an opportunity to set out the purpose of the research in more detail. In fact this met with a surprisingly poor response, some sites not responding at all. Some did agree (the sites that became A, B and C in the study.) In order to increase the sample to six, a new approach was taken, closer to opportunity sampling. In the summer of 2008 relevant conferences were reviewed, to see if the target sites would be represented, and I took the opportunity of attending these conferences and, explaining the proposed nature of the study to potential participants, which secured access to three more sites. In the event, the sixth potential participant decided they were unable to participate, although this decision was not communicated until after I had conducted the fifth visit. Having made some progress in data analysis at this stage, I

decided that data from a sixth case would be unlikely to add anything significant to the study, given the time available.

One of the advantages of case study research is that multiple data collection tools can be used to identify themes. In this study, the predominant, though not the sole, data gathering method was the semi-structured interview. The value of this approach is that it encourages the subject to talk about issues that are important to them, while allowing the researcher to explore their own scepticism by probing further, encouraging the participant to expand on particular points. (Carruthers, 1990). It also allows the researcher to clarify meaning when asking questions. The research questions are concerned with understandings of the role of the university, and also with approaches to the introduction of technology, so the flexibility of the interview allows the researcher to explore these relationships through exploratory questioning. The fact that the researcher shares the respondents' professional background should enhance their ability to notice statements that seem not to fit in with their own preconceptions. A further advantage of this shared background, is that the participant may be more comfortable talking to a researcher who is facing the same professional problems as themselves.

The fact that there is a script also ensures that the researcher addresses all the issues that they want to address. One interview with one member of staff was conducted at each site, although in one case there were two members of staff present. Care was taken to overcome some of the disadvantages of the interview as a data gathering method. Respondents were approached prior to the interview, to establish that they were happy to talk about what may be confidential matters. Gender, ethnicity and age of the interviewer may affect what the interviewee is willing to reveal (Denscombe, 2003:184). In fact, the participants and the researcher all belonged to the same ethnic group, (white British) and were in roughly the same age group, perhaps most tactfully described as mid to late career. Three of the interviewees were male, and three female, although this was coincidental rather than planned for, and may reflect the fact that educational development is still an emerging profession consisting of a relatively homogeneous group of people.

It is acknowledged that there are some drawbacks to interviews. They require a great deal of time to prepare and conduct, access to participants needs to be negotiated, and they generate a great deal of data, the analysis of which requires also requires a considerable investment of time and effort on the part of the researcher. But these criticisms might be made of almost any research method, and interviews do appear to offer the best compromise between validity, and pragmatism. A researcher may develop a more accurate understanding of a participant's role by, for example, shadowing and observing the participant over a period of time, but to do this over five case studies would not have been possible, given the time and resources available to complete this research. Such an approach would also have required considerable negotiation and planning if the work that is being researched was not to be disrupted, and any findings distorted. Recording and analysing the data would also have presented considerable logistical problems.

In order to overcome some of the methodological drawbacks of the interview, permission was secured to audio record the interviews. The experience of transcribing interviews from audiocassettes in the pilot study suggested that it would be wise to invest in digital recording equipment and download the sound files onto a computer, rather than manually stopping and starting a tape recording during transcription. Two such recorders were purchased and used in the interviews, the second to provide a back up of the recording in case of battery failure. To minimise the risk that the shared assumptions of the researcher and participant might direct the course the interview might take, (Cohen *et al*, 2000:121) the schedule created was a modified version of that used in the pilot study, and the researcher asked a colleague from another department to review the proposed schedule before using it, although that colleague did not suggest any significant alterations be made.

From three of the units, printed literature was collected and analysed for collaborative evidence. None was available from the other units. Documents of this nature are indispensable in case study (Yin, 2003:87), as they were usually created for a purpose unrelated to the research, for example to advertise the services provided by the unit. Neglecting such documents runs the risk that the researcher will fail to see some very important aspects of the research setting, because they can shed considerable light on how participants have constructed their understandings of their role. For example, in

an interview a participant might claim that they do not impose a particular way of working on colleagues, but such a claim might be undermined by the existence of a set of help sheets, published by the unit that, for example, describe a single methodology for building e-learning into their curricula.

Finally extensive field notes and photographs were taken on each visit, in order to enrich the data. The environment in which people work inevitably influences their perceptions, and it is helpful in identifying aspects of the research situation that the participants may have come to take for granted (Bodgan & Biklen, 1982). Clearly, photographs can not be used in the final report without compromising anonymity, the notes made during each visit are largely subjective, and the researcher's tacit knowledge can play a significant part in deciding what to record (Wolfinger, 2002). Nevertheless, along with photographs, field notes provide a useful aide-memoire for the researcher and, as with documents, are able to provide an alternative perspective on the data provided by the interviews.

A criticism sometimes made of the case study is that it is difficult to ensure reliability (Bell, 2005). Reliability is the extent to which the data reported on in the research is actually the data that was gathered. Scott and Morrison's (2005) warning that a critical researcher may overlook data in pursuit of a political agenda, might be seen as a particular problem in this research. The researcher himself works in an EDU, and thus has a vested interest in making a case for the continuing funding of EDUs. It is plausible that, even if a conscious effort is made not to do so, data that does not support that case may be under emphasised or neglected. In order to minimise this risk the following steps were taken. Firstly, the interview schedule has been provided at Appendix B, so future researchers could repeat the interviews. Secondly, the anonymised transcripts of the interviews can be provided, as can copies of documents, photographs and field notes. These transcripts are in the researcher's possession, as are the original recordings. All participants were invited to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts, and where they did so, the confirmations are also in the researcher's possession.

Tools

The principal research instrument in this study was the semi structured interview schedule. It was felt that it would be useful to establish the history of the unit, what predecessors it might have had, what participants felt were the main corporate drivers of the unit's activity, their own background, and their perceptions of the models of the university. Further light would be shed on these matters by asking participants about more specific activities, such as the type of development activities they ran for colleagues. For example, did the unit provide workshops, run award-bearing courses, publish help sheets and so on? Secondly, direct questions were asked about the unit's involvement in introducing new technologies into the curriculum. Was it the principal site for the introduction of the university's virtual learning environment? Did the unit offer support for what might be more accurately described as research support technologies, such as Nvivo, or Refworks? Finally, in order to get a sense of participants' understanding of the academic environment in which they were operating it was felt useful to devise questions about that environment. For example, did the unit understand its clients as being primarily researchers, rather than teachers, or vice versa, and what respondents thought were their principal sources of funding.

The interviews were transcribed using Audio Cleaning Lab software. This displays a visualisation of the sound track allowing the recording to be stopped and started at precise points, and to save these points, should the transcribing session be interrupted. It also has tools to enhance the audibility of the recording, and can be opened in a window adjacent to one in which the word processing software that is being used to type the transcript is open. This facilitates checking the accuracy of what is being typed, by dragging the Audio Cleaning Lab cursor back across the soundtrack visualisation, and reading the transcript as that section of the recording plays back.

Transcription was completed within 48 hours of each interview, and the analysis of the data began immediately after that, as opposed to waiting until all the interviews had been completed. While this may appear to contrast with the parallel approach to the case study visits, it minimises the risk of the transcriber misremembering those sections of the recording which were not clearly audible. In any case it is not possible to prevent entirely, impressions gained on one visit informing a subsequent visit, so

nothing would be lost by early transcription. This approach owes much to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1999). While the researcher should, ideally, enter the research situation with a completely open mind, it is not possible to enter a field with no theoretical perspective, or to prevent one forming as the research progresses. Transcripts can be stored for later data analysis, which itself may, with the benefit of reflection, generate new concepts. This is particularly important where the researcher, as in this case, is professionally employed in the field being researched, and may thus have some preconceptions about the issues.

Data Analysis

Prior to analysis of the case study data, notes from the literature were loaded into Nvivo, and were examined for key concepts that emerged from them. Each paragraph was assigned at least one concept, although on occasion a paragraph might be assigned several concepts, or multiple paragraphs assigned to a single concept. For example a discussion of the effects of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (find one) would be coded under TQEF, but also under "National Initiatives". The purpose of this approach was to identify concepts that were significant in the literature. Among the nodes that emerged from this approach were "EDU credibility", and "EDU workload". For example, Gosling's 2001 study and Lueddeke's 1997 paper both suggested that EDU's might be engaging in a wide range of activity, which inevitably raised questions about their credibility in being able to deliver targets. It therefore seemed appropriate to look for evidence in the case study data that seemed to agree, or perhaps disagree, with the literature. Nodes that emerged from the literature also included discussions of "models of the university" partly derived from the work of McNay discussed in chapter 2. There were therefore a node for "corporate models" which was assigned to evidence that the EDU was attempting to impose normative models of teaching, another for "bureaucratic models", which was assigned to evidence that the EDU was trying to use the corporate structure to manage academics, for example through working through the committee structure and, finally a node was created for "collegial models", used for evidence that the EDU was prioritising the work of academic colleagues.

In fact these initial nodes proved rather unsatisfactory, as there was considerable overlap between them. One of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the literature is that there are conflicting pressures on EDUs. One way of mapping the sources of these pressures is by examining interview data seeking evidence of who EDU's interact with. While this is not

predictive of what an EDU will do in any given university, it does give a strong indication of typical patterns that might be found and shows how EDUs interact with their environment. Sacks' notion of Membership Categorisation Devices (described in Silverman, 1985, p135-7) suggests that people who interact with the EDU, can be grouped into certain categories, and further that these categories are associated with certain behaviours. One might for example, associate 'academics' as 'resistant to technology' although it might plausibly be argued that this is an oversimplification.

It followed from this that an important task was to go through the data, which consisted of interview transcripts, field notes, unit web sites, and documents and identify who the respondents thought it was important that their EDU interacted with. This was done by identifying a description of, or even a reference to an interaction with a specific group of staff in an interview, or a case study document and creating a code for that group of staff. Then, the data was re-examined for references to interaction with that group. Firstly, respondents thought that they primarily interacted with academic staff, the analysis identifying 87 references throughout the data to this group of staff. The second largest group were support staff, to whom 36 references were made. Third were senior managers with 27 references, and fourth were students, with 24 references. References to these groups were found across all case studies. Three of the respondents discussed work with external groups, although there were only 4 references made to this group in total. Curiously only one respondent referred to researchers, although it is reasonable to suggest that the "academic" group may well include this category. All these were organised into a tree node (a higher level code) called "relationships" but each individual relationship was made into a separate folder, or branch node.

The case study data were further analysed for key concepts, using the same technique the analysis taking the form of reviewing the field notes, and giving labels (names) to the component parts that that seemed to be of potential theoretical significance" (Bryman, 2008:542). This process took place in two stages. In the first stage, the aim was to identify concepts emerging from the data, and a list of open codes (or " Free nodes" in Nvivo's terminology) were identified.) There was no attempt to relate these codes to each other for example, by grouping them into categories, until all the data were collected. This was done in the second stage. As one might have expected from the literature a wide range of categories emerged, including the importance of the location of the unit in terms of its physical proximity to the rest of the campus, and how it was laid out, (coded as "physical environment") and where it seemed to sit in the organisational structure (coded as "power sources", since it could be argued the EDU derives any power it does have from elsewhere).

However, the dominant theme found in all 5 case studies was the EDU's focus on learning technology. This was further analysed into sub categories, including the EDUs own work with technology, as might be suggested by the research and development model described in chapter 2, the use of technology in teaching, the technological context in which the EDU was operating, for example were attempts it might make to innovate constrained by institutional policies with regard to technology, as the "change agent" might imply. The analysis of the data therefore strongly suggested that the respondents saw their EDUs as being a source of a particular type of expertise, in learning technology, but were careful to manage the relationships through which they deployed that expertise. This evidence is provided in more detail in chapter 4.

Conclusions

As Gosling (2001, 2006) has shown, no two EDUs are exactly alike, and to attempt to arrive at a deontic model, which prescribes appropriate practices, is unlikely to be successful, especially with respect to technological innovation, given technology's tendency to construct controlling metanarratives. Land (2004) also rejected the possibility of a 'valorised' model of educational development. Yet, to rephrase Searle (2004), EDUs do what they do because that's what we think they should do. A plausible, authentic and credible model can help those working in EDUs, and those using them, to work towards a mutual understanding of what can be achieved.

This, then, is a critical, interpretative study of how universities are attempting to implement change to the professional practices of university teachers, through the work of the EDU. The EDU appears to be the site within the university where attempts are made to connect the realities of academic life to external change, imperatives, themselves derived from social and political change. These social realities make an interpretivist approach more useful in arriving at an accurate description of the work done by EDUs. A more critical approach, describing the way EDUs operate by making reference to their social world, would be the most effective way of answering the research questions. For these reasons, a multiple case study, which allows a research situation to be examined from different perspectives and based on the comparison of multiple data sources, was chosen as the most appropriate approach to the research questions. The next chapter presents those findings in detail.

Chapter 4

Seeking a model for EDUs: Research evidence.

Introduction and description of the cases

In this chapter data from the case study sites is examined from the perspective of the original research questions. A summary of the data from each site is presented here, following themes that emerged from the literature review, and organised around the research questions. Data relevant to each question is examined from the perspective of the hypothetical models postulated in chapter 2, that is the change agent, the collegial unit, and the research and development unit.

In order to help the reader form a more detailed sense of the context of the cases studied this section also offers brief details about each of the institutions. Details of student numbers are taken from the details for the academic year 2008-9 published on the HESA web site (http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/component/option,com_datatables/Itemid,121/task,show_category/catdex,3/#institution [accessed 21/07/2010]) Note, that the numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand, in order to preserve the anonymity of the cases

Site A is a large, pre1992 Russell Group university, situated in a very large open campus on the edge of an industrial city. (28,000 students) At the time of the visit the educational development unit has 9 professional staff, supported by an administrative team of 5 people. The unit is situated in the administrative block of the university and staff appeared to work in a large open plan office, which was not open to casual visitors. There was a meeting room, where the interview took place, but other than that there were very few, if any single occupancy offices. The unit had been re-organised in 2006 and in that re-organisation appears to have taken on more of the functions of a traditional staff development unit, whereas before it had primarily been involved in supporting the work of academics. It has also taken on a much larger client group than the other units visited, and is the largest of the units in this study. According to the unit's web site it's remit was to focus on assisting colleagues with innovative ideas. There was some evidence from the site that staff had been active in

research and publication. The web site gave the impression that the site was focussed on accreditation of colleagues, rather than quality enhancement or assurance. For example there were programmes of workshops and a mandatory PGCE for new staff. There was no evidence of involvement in quantitative metrics of quality, such as involvement in the NSS,, nor was there evidence of involvement with student skill development, although this could be read as implicit in the unit's focus on curriculum enhancement.

The Respondent at this site was the head of department, chosen because the unit had recently undergone a restructuring and a repurposing, and respondent felt that they were best able to tell the story of the unit, reluctantly admitting that not all colleagues had been enthusiastic about the changing role of the unit. This respondent's original career had been as a researcher, but they didn't see themselves as an "educational developer" but rather as a staff developer, having as they put it "been in the business a long time, well over 20 years". They had started in higher education, but had worked in both public and private sectors, in staff development and publishing, and had subsequently worked as a lecturer in higher education. The respondent stated that predecessors in post had wanted to be RAEable, but that was not an ambition that they shared.

> *"You know, I don't have a doctorate, I do what I do, and I would say that the University was quite deliberate in choosing somebody who came from a very varied background. They didn't want somebody who actually came from an educational development, or even from an academic background. No they deliberately chose somebody who came in with a general broad background who had in fact and they wanted somebody with a commercial background as well who was used to running units, running and managing and leading units."*

It was quite clear therefore that this respondent had a rather managerial view of their role, and may thus have been less sympathetic to the collegial or "research & development" models described in chapter 2.

Site B is a post 1992 university, located in a small industrial city. This is a large institution, with 28000 students The unit, consisting of approximately 20 staff was situated in a large modern building on the edge of the city centre. Six staff appeared to be associated with specific projects, which the university had successfully bid for funding, A further six had job titles that implied a role in e-learning, or multimedia development, four staff did not publicly display their titles on the web site, and there were four with titles related to research and teaching. Unusually for an inner city location the unit was very open to visitors. Unlike any of the other sites there was no reception desk, and I was able to wander in freely and unchallenged. In all other cases I had to introduce myself at a reception desk and wait to be escorted to the interview. On entering the unit there was a small waiting area equipped with comfortable chairs, and a water cooler. Beyond that there was an area equipped with PCs, which I discovered in the interview had been designed as a "drop-in" area for staff. This was surrounded by staff offices, each of which was occupied by a single developer. Beyond this area were two further meeting rooms both equipped with PCs and tables and in one case coffee and tea making equipment. This unit has been rather longer established than the others, or at least appears to have escaped significant re-organisation for the past 8 or 9 years. The unit's web site claims that its role is to support the "improvement" of teaching. In spite of the presence of staff to support research and teaching, I was unable to find evidence that any of the staff with these roles had themselves been active in. The web site also indicated a strong interest in e-learning, which made this a particularly interesting site, given the research question about how units approach staff with regard to the introduction of technology into their teaching. Interestingly the unit did not appear to be responsible for the university's PGCE, but did appear, in contrast to site A to have some involvement in the measurement of quality. There also appeared to be some involvement in promoting learning skills among students but the relevant pages were only available to internal users.

The respondent at site B, was chosen because they were the most senior, and the longest established member of staff in the unit, and therefore it was felt that they would be able to tell a more convincing story of the unit. I originally contacted the head of the unit, explaining my research and asking for advice on appropriate contacts, and respondent B was suggested as likely to be the person who could tell me

more than any other member of staff. The respondent's job title also implied that they had responsibility for both pedagogical development, and learning technology, contrasting with the more specialised roles that other members of staff in the unit appeared to have. Like respondent, A this respondent had also started out as a researcher, although this time in a more scientific environment, specifically in a national laboratory overseas. However, they said that they had always been interested in teaching, and when they had come to work in England for family reasons, they had taken the opportunity to move into a teaching role, taking the opportunity to get involved in the departmental teaching and learning group. They had had a faculty based role of "teaching and learning co-ordinator" for two years. This respondent's focus was more on e-learning

> *"I realised that there wasn't much of a teaching and learning need for e-learning within the university and so I managed to persuade people that there should be and that's when I moved to the LDU"*

There is an implication here that the respondent thinks that technology in particular can bring some benefits to teaching, so as with respondent A, may have some sympathy with both the change agent, and research & development models. However, there interest in, and experience of teaching also suggests that they may be inclined to take a more pragmatic collegial approach to working with colleagues.

Site C is a post 1992 university located on the outskirts of a small city in the English Midlands, and is by some margin the smallest of the cases, having only 13,000 students . The educational development unit is situated in a suite of offices in the university library, although it has been re-organised since the time of the case study visit. The organisation of this unit was quite unusual in that it is split into two discrete teams, each with separate offices, one concerned with the development of teaching and learning, and one concerned with the use of technology, both of which were staffed by five people. There did not appear to be any provision made for visitors, although the technology office was adjacent to an area of the library, which, at the time of the visit, was furnished with comfortable chairs and thus could serve as a waiting area or reading room. In the past technologically focussed training had been provided by the Information Technology department, but that this had not proved

adequate for the needs of the university in training staff to integrate technology into the university's curricula. Prior to the visit, the unit's web site, suggested that its remit was to emphasise innovation, and stressed that they were heavily involved with externally funded technological projects. Staff contributed to the delivery of the university's PGCE, although the unit did not have any direct responsibility for delivering it. There was no evidence of direct work with students, also the re-organisation since the case study visit appears to have placed greater emphasis on this area of work.

Respondent C was the head of the IT section of the unit, and as with respondent B, a long serving member of staff in this unit. Their background, like respondent A was in staff training, but with a specialism in information technology. In fact the respondent stated that they started out as "essentially an IT trainer, then I became a learning technologist". From there they had moved into management, becoming head of an academic IT support department, running all aspects of IT in the university. However the respondent had a strong interest in social psychology, having done their first degree in that discipline, and felt that a role working in learning technology could bring together aspects of social psychology, developmental work, and innovation, and how to apply them. As the respondent put it

> *I think it's quite nice working with people and introducing something new*
> *to them that will enhance their practice in some way shape or form, and*
> *you know, if you can see that happen. That's why I think it's quite nice to*
> *see the evaluations and see those things that say "This really helped me,*
> *or I was really pleased" And you think "Yeah, it's really made a*
> *difference". And for me, as long as I feel like I'm making a difference,*
> *making an impact, in an area that I enjoy, that's quite valuable.*

This approach suggests that this respondent, while not unaware of the importance of bringing about innovation and change in teaching practice, is sensitive to the values of academic colleagues, and may be more cautious about imposing change. This made them the most appropriate choice as the person who would be able to give an objective account of the unit's relationship with the wider university, since there is a strong sense here of "working with" colleagues, rather than "working on" colleagues.

Site D is also a post 1992 university located on an inner city site, located in the centre of a large industrial town having approximately 22,000 students. As the respondent showed me around the campus, I noticed that steps had been taken to seal off many of the entrances to surrounding streets by using steel gates, and other quite intimidating security measures. This had had the effect of creating a campus that felt isolated from its urban surroundings, although there was a very friendly and welcoming feel from the campus's main reception desk to the unit itself. The unit, had 16 staff at the time of my visit, although, three appeared to concentrate entirely on external projects. Since the visit an additional "Blended learning team" has been created consisting of and additional six staff. The unit itself consisted of a large polygonal open plan space, with additional rooms off it. There were about eight desks in the large space, and there had been some attempt at using furniture to make more private spaces in one corner. There was also a small waiting area with some comfortable seats, a water cooler and a bookshelf with lots of journals and publicity material to read. The unit's remit, as implied by its web site suggested it was strongly focussed on e-learning, although rather unusually for an EDU web site there was no statement about the value of innovation. The unit also listed details of staff publications in learning and teaching. This unit did and still does run a PGCE, but there was no evidence of involvement in quality assurance metrics, such as the National Student Survey. As with the other units, there was little explicit emphasis on student skills work, with the important exception of a very strong emphasis on the introduction of personal development planning into the curriculum.

Respondent D was identified as the most appropriate member of staff for the study because they had had the most experience in the area of pedagogical support as well as considerable experience of technological development. They were identified as a suitable candidate after I attended a presentation they gave about the unit's work in introducing personal development planning into the university's curriculum, and identified a variety of technological, pedagogical and structural issues. They were first brought into the university to design distance learning packages, for craft, design and technology teachers, and from this, had developed an interest in developing support for students with hearing disabilities. An interest in technology had come from a grant from the European Social Fund to look at the use of video footage to support such

students in the region, and this had led to the respondent developing degrees in "Deaf Studies" and "Sign language interpreting"

An interesting insight into the respondent's attitude to the work of the unit came from the following remark about how they joined the unit

> *When I was interviewed I talked a lot about student experience, student issues. I didn't get that post, but they actually said we need you and created a post for me so that was quite nice, and then I moved into [the unit] and I developed our learning and teaching strategy to have students in it, to start with. It was staff and technology. Those were the two themes and so I developed the whole area of expertise.*

This suggests, as with respondents B and C, some sensitivity to the complexity of academic work, and indicates a likely preference for working collegially with academic colleagues, and incidentally also indicates that prior to the respondent joining the unit it may have had a rather normative approach to change.

Site E is a pre-1992 university of a similar size, (22000 students) located on a suburban campus in a large industrial city in the North of England. The EDU at this institution had been disbanded shortly before my research visit, making it difficult to offer a physical description although there was evidence from the University's web site that it had been active in a very wide range of areas and dealt with multiple disciplines across the university. Further it was not possible to identify how many staff the unit had actually had, although the respondents implied that it had been very fluid, with many people seconded to the team on a temporary basis. After the units disbandment, the technological aspects of the unit's work appeared to have been moved to the library, in that one of the respondents (respondent E1) who had a particular responsibility for the University's VLE was now based in an office within the library, and reports to the University librarian. Fortunately, during the process of selecting the case studies, parts of the units web site were still extant, and it was possible to get a sense of the unit's remit. Like the other units, it placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of curriculum innovation, and was heavily involved with externally funded technological projects. It had been involved in the delivery of the

university's PGCE but the extent of this could not be determined. Unlike the other units, the web site made several references to quality assurance procedures, although the unit appeared to be involved in local measurement of quality, as opposed to national measurements. Another significant difference between this unit and the others was that there was quite an extensive description of the unit's involvement with student skills development. Since the unit no longer existed, it was thought useful to get the views of two respondents, since data could not be got from field notes, documentation, or a live web site. The two respondents chosen represented different aspects of the university's work, respondent E1 having a background in technology, and respondent E2 having an academic background in the discipline of education. They were identified through personal contact with other colleagues at the university, in that a former colleague had since moved to their university, and I sought advice from that colleague on appropriate people to interview about the EDU.

What is the relationship between EDU staff's perception of their role, and hypothetical models of the university derived from the literature?

Change Agents

In answer to questions about their own models of universities, the respondents acknowledged that their own institution played a strong role in forming their perceptions. The university does have a role to play in providing a service to the community, by rendering its members more knowledgeable, and this is a joint effort between the EDU, teaching staff and support staff. For example Respondent A described the nature of the university thus.

> *I mean as far as the Vice-chancellor's concerned we're here to be a top international university by the year 2015. I would say that we're a research intensive university which also tries to be excellent in its teaching. We have very strong regional links, we have quite a presence within the region, we're quite a major employer. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

The reference to the "Vice chancellor" is quite significant, in that it suggests that the unit is driven by demands articulated by senior management. The other four sites emphasised the role of the university as a community institution.

> *I see our role as a teaching institution, and to a lesser degree as a community institution. I think we are, obviously the largest employer in [the city], a lot of recruitment is from the local area, and to a large degree we do play a role in the community, not as large a role as perhaps we could. So I think I would say teaching first, followed by research, followed by community. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

Respondent C too was focused on the university's mission, offering a slightly more radical interpretation of the university's role

> *I think the role of the university has been to develop our learners as independent learners, as people who can go out and contribute well in society. I think we'd be failing in our mission if we didn't produce those types of students. And I think the university has a role in the community, in community life in general. We haven't got a big research agenda, we focus more on the teaching and learning side, so I guess it's in terms of trying to add some value to the students, as they pass through us, trying to see their… I guess, the whole experience, the lifelong learning experience.(Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

Respondent D did not talk about the community in particular, but instead emphasised "product" which could be interpreted as providing something to the wider community.

> *I think universities have forgotten what their product is, and I think this is what we've tried to say. Learning and teaching is what we manufacture and if we were looking at an organisation it's not the content of the subject, it's actually the gaining of knowledge and the delivery of that knowledge and I think one of our key things is to try and get that through (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08) .*

The respondents at site E were also focused on describing how others saw the university, although respondent E2 did briefly hint that the unit may have had a role to play in changing minds, while acknowledging that this was very difficult.

> *I find a lot of staff here think it's about expanding people's minds which is poorly defined and not measured So have we done it? So I think there is that concept among a lot of staff that that's what we're for (Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)*

I would say there was division is to how far the university is seen as serving the community and the region. [The unit] saw it very much as doing that and so it's got a real role in developing the community and other parts not seeing that as a role at all. (Respondent E2, lecturer in on-line learning and education, 20/08/08).

Institutional imperatives also appeared to exercise a strong influence on the organisational structures and purposes of units. For example, the unit at site A had been re-organised in 2006 and in that re-organisation it appears to have taken on more of the functions of a traditional staff development unit, whereas before the focus had been more on supporting the work of academics. It has also taken on a much larger client group than the other units visited. As the respondent described it:

This is prior to my arrival, the university was having a rethink and thinking "Well, do we want things to still be done in this way?" There was some non-academic staff development that was organised through HR and the university began to think, "well, you know, we've got non specialists, in other words, HR people, up the corridor, doing, organising, learning development, whatever, for non academic staff, and then we've got another unit, that's doing for academic and research staff, particularly with the Roberts funding coming in, this doesn't make a lot of sense. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

The staff development directory 2007/8 (a copy is in the author's possession), shows development events for three categories of staff; academic and administrative staff, manual staff , and research staff. It is worth noting that the workshops listed in the directory are usually categorised as being for two or more of these categories, and are rather generic in nature. Listed in the directory there are several events provided aimed solely at academic staff, and none aimed solely at manual staff. The respondent described the organisational structure of the unit thus;

So the way we're organised is that [there's](the respondent was using an organisation chart during the interview) *the Director of the Centre and then we have, there's two, there's three senior managers here. This is a client delivery manager who's got a team of seven people, administrators, plus two people who are concerned with the web site and publicity and the idea is that this client delivery team is responsible for everything from first touch all the way through to evaluation and then back round again. Evaluation of the programmes and then back round in the same way. How does this inform design and delivery and so forth, what do we need to change? So that's that group, and then the other group which is the other side, and…you've got two learning development managers, one serving*

the academic and research side of things and the other one, the non academic (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

This extract reveals that site A is not just involved in the provision of workshops, but is concerned to provide a comprehensive development programme, implying that the university needs to train its staff to meet particular needs. This appeared to have caused some problems for the operation of the unit itself.

And also an issue is (and this is confidential) is that I inherited almost all the staff so they were taken on to be academic developers. They weren't taken on to develop people across the piece, across all client groups (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

Site A also runs a formal postgraduate certificate in education for new staff, in which the staff of the unit are involved in assessing. The PGCE delivered at site A was compulsory for staff who were in their probationary period.

we make the completion of a postgraduate certificate, erm, mandatory, as a condition of probation, unless you can either claim exemption or be granted APEL which obviously means you do a reduced version (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

Even though they were trying to work to the HEA Professional Standards Framework, colleagues did not always welcome this kind of intervention: - .

We can interpret that (i.e. the Standards Framework) in our own way, and do try and interpret in the best way but what we are trying to achieve is teaching quality which is a particular issue obviously in a research intensive university, and getting a good emphasis on that and making sure that we've got entry level, baseline, it's almost like passing your driving test, ...some staff find that, well, they spend the period of time being on the programme, which is 2 plus years in a state of deep offence. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

The unit at site A placed less emphasis on other functions associated with EDUs in the literature. This kind of activity appears to have been dispersed throughout the university. PDP, e-learning or quality assessment were for example, not seen as being a responsibility of the unit.

I wouldn't be involved in that, [another centre] would be involved in that, so they've actually done that work, so not me directly, no. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

...they've embedded four e-lab advisors within each faculty, so Arts, Science & Engineering, Med School and Social studies and they've got those four people embedded in, within, some of whom have gone quite native and have, and do fantastic work. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

In fact a question about involvement with the National Student survey provoked a surprisingly violent response;

Q: Actually, one of the other things we managed to get ourselves in … was involvement in the National Student Survey, or administering it to start with

A: Oh my God no! Oh my God no! Oh no, no, no, no NO. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

There was evidence that the now disbanded unit at site E had also seen itself as supporting the university in its attempts to meet a deficit. Originally, this unit had had a very large range of functions including "ICT learning", "Study Advice Services", "Continuing Professional development", "e-learning" "PGCE programme" "Study skills for CPD staff" and a "television and editing facility". There is still a "learning and teaching support" unit, but its function appears to be almost exclusively to disseminate support material via the web, and in doing so appears to draw quite extensively on the expertise of former members of the disbanded unit to author this material. At the time of writing (April 2009), this site did not appear to have been developed to any great extent.

The interview at site E was conducted with two members of staff, both former members of the educational development unit, one of whom had a learning technology background and one of whom had an academic background, having been based in the Faculty of Education. They drew quite powerful pictures of the political manoeuvring that had gone on around the creation and disbandment of the unit.

There's a history of about 10 years of how we ended up where we are. Some of it was before I joined the university. We recently, about a year ago disbanded [our EDU], which would have been the main focus. The [unit] came about 10 years ago, maybe less, 8-10 years ago, and was formed from staff within the institute for learning and from staff in academic services… It was formed around one person, who was going to leave, or wanted a department to fulfil a learning development type role and there was lots of politics, and one of the trade offs involved was that our department ended up in the institute for learning which was probably

75

the right place. The payback for that decision was the people who that team got. (laughs). That came into being and the person who it was formed around actually left. So it was headless for a while. Within that the e-learning team was formed and, indeed, grew. Study advice service which was student focused the PGCE people, ICT training, that's about it I think (Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)

I don't mean this personally, as somebody in a department looking at what [the unit] was, some of the things that it supposedly was trying to do. The heads of [the unit] would put people, on committees, for example so there was somebody put on to the Assessment Committee but the person who was put onto the Assessment Committee basically didn't know anything about the reality in departments, in programmes or in courses and it felt like "What are you talking about – they don't know" … I do know that I'm not alone in people having looked at [the unit] and thinking "but they…they're divorced from what we're doing" because they're not academics in departments (Respondent E2, lecturer in on line learning and education, 20/08/08)

It is possible to detect a sense that 'something needs to be done' in these extracts. There was a need for a 'learning development type role', implying that the university was failing to deliver an appropriate learning experience for students. The attempt to 'put people on committees' indicates an attempt to influence the work of those committees, although as respondent E2 admitted that was not particularly successful because of a certain resistance 'they're divorced from what we're doing…because they're not academics'

The other sites provided less evidence that they saw the university as something that needed fixing, although my questions about the origins and history of the units did reveal evidence that they were all set up to remedy a perceived problem with university teaching. That might be expected, given that they are largely funded by the TQEF, a resource that was provided primarily for "teaching quality enhancement" in which the notion that teaching needs enhancing is implicit. One might then expect that staff working in them are likely to develop a perception of their role as being that of a change agent, but the evidence from sites B, C and D, suggests that this perception, while valid, is tempered by considerable pragmatism.

The unit at site B appears to have been longer established, or at least to have escaped significant re-organisation. There is an emphasis on technology. As the respondent here put it

I think the unit was formed probably about 8 or 9 years ago. Before that there really wasn't an educational development unit, there was what was called a Centre for Learning Technologies, but it's remit was really very different from the unit as it is now. It was really a technical development unit, sort of "guns for hire" across the university, so the formation of the unit… it really has started from scratch as a new initiative in the university, and it had really, two parts. One was, it did take in the staff from the Centre for Learning Technologies, but the remit changed to more directly supporting technology development in the university and staff, but then this other side is to support more general learning and teaching development (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning)

There was also emphasis on encouraging colleagues to visit the unit, the respondent saying that

as much as possible we try to let people have their own offices where they can be responsible for one to one training or consulting sessions (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

Site B was the only unit among those visited that had this kind of office space, although the other units visited did have access to at least one seminar room, suggesting that units do see themselves, to some extent, as places to which colleagues can come as opposed to being teams that go out; 'guns for hire', in Respondent's B's phrase.

The work of Educational Development at site C is divided between two teams. One team is responsible for teaching and learning development, and the other has responsibility for technological development of learning. The respondent at this site worked in the learning technology team, and so the interview here tended to focus very much on that aspect of educational development.   As the respondent described it

Our team was formed… we actually started the merger of library and IT in 2006 and the team that I'm in essentially comes from parts of the old IT department, and parts of the old learning resources department which essentially was library and those parts have come together. What we've done is…we knew that we wanted a bigger team because essentially the majority of learning technology work was essentially done in the old IT department. It was done by dedicated learning technologists, and by some other people who did PC support alongside their role, and I think what we've identified over the past few years is that we needed a dedicated team to focus in this area (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

There was a formal relationship with the non-technical learning and teaching team, which was not found at any of the other sites.

> *There's never been a large number of people in that team, so they've had a more guidance, sort of directing role. Presently what's happening is that we have regular monthly meetings to make sure that we are developing and moving forward together. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

There is clearly a strategic imperative for the EDU, implicit in the remark about making 'sure that we are developing and moving forward together'.

Site D was explicitly set up to deliver the university's learning and teaching strategy. The respondent at this site offered limited support for the argument that the establishment of educational development units was one way in which universities could show that they were responding to the requirements of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.

> *The main development was in 1999, and it was to deliver the learning and teaching strategy. It's always been a very small core team. ... We've never been called a staff development unit, although we're all staff developers but we are a unit that writes, delivers, supports the learning strategy and that has been very much our identity. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

While it is acknowledged that staff development is part of the unit's role, the respondent is also clear that it is not a staff development unit, suggesting that there may be a tension between EDUs with that kind of role and more traditional staff development units based in human resources departments.

Collegial

The respondents acknowledged that the EDU could not bring about change on its own. In many cases representatives of the EDU had *ex officio* membership of several committees. Nearly all the respondents regarded committee work as a vital part of the work they did in building relationships with academic and with other colleagues. Typically these committees, or in some cases working groups, were responsible for quality enhancement, or teaching and learning, as at site A:

I sit on the Quality Enhancement Working Group which reports into the Academic Quality Standards Committee which reports to Senate. ... I'm a member of the e-learning working group ... I sit on both the steering and the management committees of that as a full member. I also get involved in, we do teaching and awards and I'm on that panel, when we do things like TQEF funds, educational innovation funds, all that kind of thing I sit on the judging panel. ... for academic fellowships, I sit on that judging panel. I also do, the Academic Quality Standards Committee [which] approves all course validations that come through so formally sitting as a full member on that I have that involvement, so it's whether it's collaborative, or whatever the courses are, they all come through AQSC, and I'm a full member of that committee so I do have that formal involvement. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

These committees are closely associated with the strategic direction of the university, as the reference to going "straight to senate" indicates. The fact that the respondent at site A is the director of the unit suggests that this pattern may not be typical, and at sites B, C and D, there was more emphasis on more pragmatic involvement with "local" or faculty groups, although EDU staff are involved with the central committees too, as respondent D described;

I chair the student support coordinators committee and that's where we get all the school co-ordinators, the dean of students, representatives of certain groups like the counselling and guidance service, employment and careers service, the Start Right Project. I chair that, and any findings from that I report into our Centre. I quite often sit on the university's Quality Enhancement Committee very often presenting papers or representing my department if my director can't make it. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

Sites B, and C and D offered some evidence of the EDU forming it's own working groups at some of these sites especially with regard to technology. Site B had created an "academic technologies panel" specifically to encourage experimentation with new technologies.

In fact, after a couple of years of lobbying we've just received approval to set up what we're calling an Academic Technologies Panel, and that will provide funding to academics and a small support network infrastructure, so rather than having to go through the formal business processes to get software installed, we can do it on a very quick basis, and the idea is that we'll be able to respond much more quickly to things like Web 2.0 developments, try them out over the course of perhaps a year, even two years and if we succeed in doing that we will have made the business case

which can then go into the standard university business processes (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

The fact that this had taken a "couple of years of lobbying" suggests that the unit at site B was prepared to invest quite a lot of effort in bringing people from across the university together. Site C had was involved in similar activities.

I've also formed a few groups, groups of staff getting involved in e-learning across the university so that's been useful for me as a liason groups as well, just to test ideas out. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

The value of the collegial approach was expressed in the interview at site E. The respondents suggested that one committee in particular had been quite effective in taking over some aspects of the work of the unit, once it had been disbanded.

So we do have a committee structure in place in the university, that offers opportunities that we might have used the [former EDU] to do previously. So a key committee within the university is the Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee, which has sub committees, such as Assessment Committee, alongside the Student Experience Committee, so these committees which I think you (to Respondent E2) sit on. (Respondent E1, Academic developer, 20/08/09)

There was further elaboration of this, and of some of the drawbacks, a few minutes later in the conversation.

The committee has been very very effective in terms of getting things taken forward really. The other gap that I think though, is there through there not being a central unit like that is in terms of things like strategy I suppose, and I think e-learning is a very good case in point. I think the university's gone backwards a lot in terms of e-learning over x number of years (Respondent E2, lecturer in on line learning and education, 20/08/08)

It is clear from these responses that the EDU staff in the case studies appear to place quite a high value on interaction with colleagues, albeit through a reasonably structured framework in their attempts to bring about change. It is acknowledged that committee and group work is part of the work of an academic, and is a legitimate activity for EDU staff to be involved in, if they are to understand the nature of academic work. "Not knowing anything about the reality" of what goes on in academic departments is, though, not an entirely reasonable criticism. The interviews

indicated that the EDU staff in the sites visited came from a variety of backgrounds. Three of the six respondents in the interviews had been former academics, (in publishing, physics and education) two had come from a computer science background, and one had come from a disability support background. All had considerable experience of the working practices of universities.

The data suggested that the work of an educational development unit extends beyond colleagues that might be termed "teaching professionals" (Laurillard, 2008). The interviews revealed a number of client groups with which educational development units work, although the level of engagement with some of them was very low. For example the staff development programme from site A groups the courses provided into four categories: "Academic";"Administrative, Library and Computing"; "Clerical, Craft, Technical & Manual"; and "Researchers". The directory also characterises some of the workshops as being for "female" "male" and "older" staff. Curiously, there is no gender distinction made for older staff. (Case document A2). This, however, was the only evidence from any of the case studies of such a formal approach. The description given by respondents B and C was much less formal:-

> They've now moved the library services and computing services back into one large umbrella organisation. We work very closely, especially with computing services, which manages the infrastructure in the sense that when we are looking to push a technology such as webCT or Adobe Connect, obviously they're crucial to it, and what tends to happen is that they provide the strict technical support, but when it comes to staff training in supporting it and using it, and sometimes even technical support, they rely on us to do it, so in general we have a very good working relationship. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08).

> Recently we've been engaged in [a project with another university] ... So what that's done is tied our learning technologists and librarians directly into the course development (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08).

However the most comprehensive range of staff involved with the unit appeared to be at site D, where the unit had adopted what might be described as a highly dispersed model

We've got 30 members of staff who are sort of semi-seconded to us in terms of 10 TSL co-ordinators, 10 learning and teaching co-ordinators, 10 student support co-ordinators, so they're our core team within the schools but then we've got 10 associate deans, who have a remit for learning and teaching. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

Overall, then, the groups who work with EDUs fall into eight groups, in three broader categories. The first category is academic staff, including lecturers, researchers, with light, or no teaching duties, and senior managers such as vice chancellors, pro-vice chancellors, deans of faculty and heads of department. The second category might be termed professional support, and includes technical support staff found in computing and business systems departments, non-technical support staff such as librarians, careers, administrative, and estates staff. The third category is those with which the EDU has relatively little contact and includes students, manual staff in areas such as building maintenance, catering and cleaning, and portering, and external people such as staff in partner colleges, local businesses, or members of local community groups.

It is not easy to draw clear boundaries between these groups. For example, there is considerable overlap between 'academics' and 'researchers'. There were, though, two specific groups of support staff whose importance was stressed by all the respondents, albeit less so at site A than at the other sites. I have termed these groups 'technical support staff,' and 'non-technical support staff.' The first group includes staff who work in IT departments, and play a key role in ensuring that the technological infrastructure of the university functions efficiently. As a group they are essential to the successful functioning of a virtual learning environment. The second group is larger and contains librarians, careers services staff, those working in support services, and, finally those involved in the administration of the university.

The 'technical support staff' group were of particular interest to development unit staff, because there was some evidence that they are, or have been, seen as having some potential to inhibit the innovative work that the educational development unit is trying to do. That reluctance arises from an entirely appropriate reluctance to encourage what they see as risk taking with the institutional infrastructure. This was expressed directly by Respondent C.

IT departments (are) often known as the bad guys. They're worried about security and the running of their network and learning technologists are pushing the boundaries, trying to open up ports all over the place. At the moment, I'm sensing there's been a little bit of a change recently, but we obviously come from a situation where the learning technology people were essentially within the IT department, so if we wanted to do something we tended to just do it, and if there was a technical problem then we'd cross that when we came to it. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

In this case the solution had been found through re-organising the unit to include the IT team. Site B had also taken an organisational approach, through the creation of its 'Academic Technologies Panel' mentioned above, although this was more along the lines of a formally sanctioned experiment.

Respondent D described some innovative work that they had done with regard to e-portfolio development, which would clearly have been dependent on a good working relationship with that group of staff.

But e-portfolio, I have a particular role for, because it came from PDP and software was designed jointly by the institution and an external company. I actually commissioned it and came up with the idea, not [the external company]. I came up with the idea of saying we need a tool to do this and I can't find anything on the market that does it. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08.)

Clearly, the relationship that the EDU has with technical support staff will also have considerable influence over its perspective on its role, especially with regard to their approaches to introducing technology into curriculum. The extracts above indicate a certain pragmatism underpinning those approaches. The infrastructure has to be robust and reliable, otherwise attempts to introduce new technologies lose credibility, but the respondents do appear to believe that this credibility is also dependent on academic staff being involved in the choice of new technologies.

All the respondents regarded the non-technical support staff as an important client group. The unit at Site A had made an explicit commitment to provide development for people in this category, although it was less clear how far it actually worked with them as opposed to providing a service for them.

And the group that we particularly were talking to were people in the clerical, technical, manual, craft…people on our grade system, grades 1-5, and they said "Well, I'm not an academic, and I don't consider myself a professional, somebody else must be organising my development." (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

The units at sites B, C, D and E however, all had regular working relationships with staff in a wide range of support services, and their comments imply a more holistic view of the institution. There is a clear recognition that the university, as experienced by students, involves far more than simply "better teaching" or meeting externally imposed benchmarks. The importance of working with staff involved in the provision of estates, quality, library and accessibility services is vital.

I also sit on, we have a Learning Environments Group, which is composed of representatives from Facilities Management, technical support from across the university and their remit is to look at pretty much what technical developments are required in terms of the physical infrastructure, and also to make sure that as technologies are rolled out, they're properly supported in terms of the physical support and also in terms of human support. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

And [I'm] also in disability co-ordinator groups as well. That's from a previous interest in disability related issues anyway and I've formed a group at the university called the General Accessibility Group. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

We have a very good relationship with our quality enhancement people and particularly with policies and documents. We will be often contracted to write them and then they are passed into quality to perhaps implement and then to follow through (respondent D, Assistant director, 22/07/08)

Even at site E the former unit staff were still heavily involved in working with non technical support staff and saw it as a valuable addition to their work

We've still got librarians and we're still going to talk about collection development. …We want to know about copyright, we want to know about this, and that, we want to know about how we manage our own content, as part of research so I think we should find much more happening… in the university from that kind of angle. (Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)

The data above suggests that at all the sites the EDU places a heavier emphasis on the building of relationships with groups of staff, other than academic colleagues. Units

come into contact with virtually all the groups in the university, to a greater or lesser extent, through the work that is done with committees. These include both academic and support staff. There was, though, no replication of site A's attempt to provide a service for staff on manual grades at any of the other sites.

Research and Development

There was some evidence in the literature, (Macfarlane, 2009) and from the author's own experience, that EDUs are increasingly becoming more formally involved in research. If the model of EDUs as research & development laboratories is credible, then one would expect that EDU staff would themselves engage in research into higher education, although there is a distinction between academic research, and the more instrumental type of research associated with research & development. Very few of the respondents saw the former as a priority, although some of the respondents did indicate a personal desire to do more research, and were not in general discouraged from doing so. The respondent as site A was very clear about the role of research in the unit.

> *I don't want to sound like a philistine, but it has to be research with a purpose, not just research for the sake of wouldn't it be fascinating to find out how many whatsits do this and that. It's one of the things that I've had to curtail, not stop, but curtail within the unit, because we don't have enough resources (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008).*

The respondent did qualify this by saying that it was appropriate for unit staff to give conference papers on professional matters, and that this was encouraged, but stated that, in their opinion, it was right that the unit was not expected to produce REF submissible papers.

Similarly, at sites B and C, the respondents were interested in pursuing a personal research agenda that could contribute to their professional agenda, but did not appear to see research as a primary function.

> *Part of the problem, to be honest was that my previous role in the university was in physics and as you can imagine moving from research in physics, to research in e-learning, and in teaching and learning is a bit of a jump, so I've started to make the transition but my primary role here is not to carry out research, so its very much a case of is anything I'm doing*

fitting into that (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08).

I'm doing an MBA, I've always tried to relate it to the team as a whole anyway, so that's quite interesting because what that does is that sees us ... as a business service in particular, and it's quite interesting relating that to how do we market that service in terms of seeing us as a more independent section of Information Services and yes we are part of 110 staff, as part of quite a large department but trying to make our mark. In terms of personal research and learning, because I'm the ALT institutional contact, I'm on quite a few external committees, and the JISC and HEA projects, I tend to keep relatively on top of most of the technology that's going on. There's always something going on that I'm always interested to find out about. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08).

Respondent D, however, saw research as "very important". This respondent was themselves doing a doctorate and described at some length a number of research projects which the unit had been involved in. The conclusion to the respondent's description is very revealing;

For example, I've just been to Holland to the "diverse" conference with a member of staff from our sign language interpreting degree, who is a very new researcher, who does some excellent work as part of a pathfinder project that I was managing, and I suggested she put this paper in for the conference. I wrote it with her, and we team presented it. The first bit we set the scene of the context of the project, the institutional framework, I presented, then she presented the subject specific bit. And that's very much how we should be operating with our colleague. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08).

For this respondent the EDU clearly has a dual function in terms of research. First it has a role of encouraging colleagues to engage in research, and second, it should collaborate with them in doing so. At site E, the issue didn't arise in the interview in any depth, partly because the successor roles that the two respondents were now occupying were, for respondent E1 a more traditional learning support role, and for respondent E2 a traditional academic post. The quotation from Respondent E1 on pages 78 above can also be read as expressing a need for the sort of local functional research that respondents A, B and C were advocating:

We want to know about copyright, we want to know about this, and that, we want to know about how we manage our own content, as part of research so I think we should find much more happening, much more

relevant happening in the university from that kind of angle(Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)

One might have expected that if an EDU were to engage in this kind of research it could play a large part in contributing to the development of a narrative of educational development, and the response from site D suggests that this may be what is happening at that site.

Other than at site A, the respondents did acknowledge that they were actively involved in seeking external funding for development projects, although there was some scepticism about the value of this kind of funding model.

> *Yes, it is seen to be a role. How can I phrase this discreetly, it's a bit like the original view of the managers that you go to e-learning and it's very easy. You install [a VLE] and that's it, you're done. They don't really understand what's required to submit good bids. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

There is an acknowledgement here that making bids for external funding is a serious commitment of time and workload in itself, something that was confirmed by Respondent C who also hinted at the difficulties of working with others, and was rather more explicit about what was required to "submit good bids":

> *It takes up a huge amount of time, and it's quite a… it can be good and it can be a frustrating process. I mean a lot of the bids that we've made; they've taken up substantial amounts of my time, both work and home time. There was a Bank Holiday Monday quite recently when I was submitting a bid to JISC at 8 o'clock in the morning, because it had to meet the deadline, and you quite often find yourself in this department, as an aggregator of other people's ideas and you're seen as responsible for pulling those ideas together. And that's been quite difficult because you've got no control of those people that are contributing, and you can set whatever timescales you want, but if they don't contribute, they don't contribute, and to be honest the evidence that you need to put into your bids to say these schools, faculties, whatever are doing x, y, and z. If those schools, faculties, won't give you the evidence, you can't write it in. It's been very difficult sometimes to get that information. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

Respondent D also acknowledged that the unit was responsible for submitting external bids, but was concerned about how to manage the projects when the bid had been successful.

Yes, we do do that. We have a slight problem, in that because we are small and we do get bids. We've just had a success with a JISC bid, we did take the decision, for example within the CETL that we wouldn't then appoint lots of external posts to run it but what we would do is second people out of the schools to work there, and backfill them.(Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

This answer illustrates a potential problem for educational development units. They rarely have enough staff to work on an additional project, and while funding is an excellent way of securing more staff, these posts tend to be temporary, and focussed on the project itself. There was evidence of a rather instrumental approach to funding in some responses with the emphasis on development, rather than pure research.

If it fits with what we're trying to do we might bid for JISC funding, but like most universities we have internal funding rounds and so forth. Different funds are set up which we can bid to because we are a unit like anybody else. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

Respondent E1 also highlighted the importance of focussing a bid on something that was going to be of benefit to the university.

in [the former unit] we did a number of projects including one JISC one, which wasn't done. But, ... we're now funded through recurring funding so we're not needing to bring the money in to keep ourselves in work, and yet we've got a permanent job to do, plus the project work as well and also that kind of perception of "what do those people do, so academic services have the e-services integration group which survived on JISC funding for years, but the question is what have they done for the university?" (Respondent E1, Academic developer, 20/08/09)

How do EDU staff conceptualise university teaching in the light of different models of the university?

Change Agents

The interviews suggested that EDUs approaches to and understanding of the working practices of university teachers appears to be tempered by an understanding that they could not impose changes in practice upon their teaching colleagues. The way that EDUs are financed does indicate that there might be some pressure on those working

in them to take a more normative approach. There was evidence that all the units visited had received some funding from the TQEF, although none were exclusively funded from that source. None of the respondents was able to be precise about exactly how they were funded, and there was some evidence that institutions make a considerable contribution to the financing of the units from sources other than the TQEF.

> *It's a mixture, we get funded from the core budget, we get things like TQEF, we get Roberts and we put them all together and that pays the salaries and my operational costs and obviously the delivery costs. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

> *I would say, I can't quote you precisely, about a third is top sliced and then the rest of it comes from the money that comes from HEFCE basically for initiatives, the learning and teaching money and stuff like that. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

> *This unit's funded principally by top slicing, so the university top slices into a number of departments, into which information services is one. Our department fits into Information Services, the Office of Learning and Teaching is funded by some top sliced money, as well as funded money like TQEF (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

> *In the past it's been TQEF, HR (?) funding and CETL funding, but we're establishment posts so we would have to be made redundant or redeployed. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

Site E no longer has a unit, so the question of funding does not arise. However, it is worth noting that educational development activity is still continuing in this institution, albeit on a rather more fragmented and dispersed basis than in the other sites visited.

'Top slicing' implies expectations of a service. Something is being paid for, and thus, must be delivered, implying a more deontic approach to teaching. There was an example at site D:

> *Our Virtual Learning Environment was designed within house... Everybody has to have their work on [it] (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

This response suggests that an expectation is communicated to students that some learning materials will be made available, so teaching staff will have to change their

practice, at least in so far as ensuring that at least some learning material is published on the VLE. This is of interest because all the respondents saw academic staff as the principal clients of their units, and the data reveals quite a complex set of relationships between staff working in educational development units and academic staff.

That complexity is derived from the close relationship between development and change. Imperatives for change can be perceived as being derived from ideas that lie outside the sphere of practice of the person or people undergoing development. As the response above indicates, an EDU is sometimes required to challenge colleagues to change their practice. Practitioners in any field of endeavour rarely welcome the critical attentions of outsiders. The respondents generally agreed that this was difficult, but that it was an essential part of their work. Some of the responses on this topic had clear echoes of the change agent model described in chapter 2.

> *we have some frequent flyers, people who'd come to the opening of an envelope really [but]what's happened to the other six, or seven hundred, 650 or whatever people, what are they doing about revisiting their practice, or considering reflecting on their teaching practice, and that's really hard. It's really hard to know how to tackle that one. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

> *I would say we do routinely try to challenge them to do things, or at least to think about doing things in a better way. It really has to be at the level of "Why don't you think about doing this, because we have no sort of authority to insist that they do something in a particular way (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

> *Within the schools we definitely have people that we liaise with more than others and if ... you advertised an e-learning event for example, the chances are you'll get some of the similar faces that you'll always see at the e-learning events. Now that's good in one way, because obviously you've got some interested people there, but it's difficult in terms of tapping into new ground (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

> *Very much it's hearts and minds, very much it's engaging staff with issues, getting their voice into policy and practice. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

It was also an important issue in the restructuring of site E, and it was the view of one of the respondents at that site that the failure to manage the relationship with

academic staff effectively may have had something to do with the disbanding of the unit.

> *You can't tell people how to teach unless you teach their subject. Well, we never set out to tell people how to teach. We like to have conversations with people. The other thing was around the effectiveness of that group. That's about how successful we are (inaudible). Apparently we work very hard, but it wasn't the right things, but it was the things my boss asked me to do. So that was disbanded with a new learning and teaching support unit created in place of the unit (Respondent E1, Academic developer, 20/08/09)*

As noted above, the "new learning and teaching support unit" respondent E1 refers to is very small indeed, and forms a part of the university's quality provision. As noted above, at the time of the case study visit, the only physical evidence of the new unit was a partially built web site. All the units are concerned about their relationship with academic staff, but worry that they are not able to interact with all of them.

There is in these extracts, a sense of unease about attempts to impose change on colleagues which was apparent in the units' delivery of traditional staff development workshops. All the units visited offered these, although only site A had devised a formal programme arising out of a perceived need.

> *that might be a response to say concerns around academics' English, because that's a staff development issue, it might be around, you know, if there was some adverse feedback around feedback, we might put on a workshop around feedback and assessment. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

In contrast the respondent at site D felt that "although we are staff developers… putting on workshops was a very small part of our job". The other sites, however, did provide events in response to major developments in their universities, commonly related to developments around the introduction of a new initiative, a perceived problem, or changes to a Virtual Learning Environment.

> *we are getting more and more requests from heads of department to organise development days. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

We offer scheduled and one-to-one drop in sessions and inductions as well (as) calendar events… up on our web site for staff and students. Some of that is the introductory getting into applications up to working with the VLE and then for staff how to make better use of the VLE as well (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

(It's) I suppose, multi-strand so I'll do a different kind of workshop with groups, so I'll go to an event and do a different kind of workshop than our training team. And then we'll have others which might be more strategic in a sense of VLE implementation. Sort of a small strategy (Respondent E1, Academic developer, 20/08/09)

Site D took a more sophisticated approach. While, as the respondent acknowledged the unit does run workshops, they are part of a much wider portfolio of activities, which are aimed at a larger clientele than just academic staff.

We would do internal conferences so we did a telling the stories conference for e-portfolios, and that could be another 100 or so. We then also have on the Corporate Staff Development Project programme, for example, I run a 2 hour workshop on writing reflections, I run a 2 hour workshop on supporting students using e-learning, and that could be anybody, whether they're administrators, academics so then you could say my influence is…I'm just writing the personal tutor policy and every academic member of staff has 50 hours for personal tutoring so percentage wise you could say that the work I do actually affects everybody (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

Staff development workshops were not seen as appropriate in every case, often because it was difficult to get colleagues to attend. One of the respondents in interview E described a situation where the unit had attempted to provide an intensive sequence of workshops;

… that phase was just total overkill. It was as if people could spend two afternoons a week at workshops. (Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)

There were some similar reservations about this kind of provision from other respondents. They believed that colleagues didn't turn up to workshops because of:

…perceived lack of time among the client group, so they don't want to give up time, they feel very bothered about time, they feel they haven't got permission as it were, that's particularly prevalent amongst contract researchers. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

While all the units do run development workshops, there appears to be a preference to tailor them to demand from colleagues, rather than impose their own, or an external agenda.

Only site A and Site D were involved in the provision of a postgraduate certificate in higher education, which was mandatory for staff new to the university, who did not hold an equivalent qualification or have at least three years experience of teaching in higher education. Site D offered the incentive of a salary increment for successful completion of this award. Respondent D's discussion of this issue also implied a rather normative approach to teaching and learning

> *Actually just being an expert in your knowledge content does not make you a teacher and doesn't make your learning accessible. I think that's been very much our philosophical viewpoint, that actually it is about the learning experience of the students and the teaching expertise of our staff that is the key thing for us, so we run a postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching. We're developing a D. Prof. (*Professional doctorate*) and that's where our staff development comes in. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

It is, of course, possible that such provision lies outside the remit of the EDU, and recent research by Gosling, (2010) indicating that mandatory PGCEs are common in the sector, suggests that this may be the case.

Collegial

If the narrative of the EDU as a change agent, working to remedy the deficit model of higher education described in chapter 1, has any validity then logically, that model ought to apply to the practice of university teaching too. There were some indications in the previous section that the respondents were uncomfortable with this idea, and looked instead to develop alternative approaches. One of these approaches was to get involved in teaching themselves, and a second was to develop award schemes, in which colleagues could apply for small grants for teaching enhancement projects.

Respondent D was the only interviewee who claimed to do any team teaching, and placed considerable emphasis on the importance of this.

We work with academic schools so I for example have team taught with colleagues that have helped with curriculum design, have helped with assessment strategies, a whole range of things… I'm very clear that we have an ethics of care to colleagues because we're inviting people to their teaching situation and I think that what they've found over time is that people have come to us and said "I'm interested in doing group work. Do you know anything?" (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

All the units delivered workshops to students, and in sites C and E the unit had had some of the functions of a help desk, in that they would pick up student enquiries usually relating to one of the technological applications for which they had responsibility. In general, though, there was a strong emphasis on supporting students through making improvements by changing the practices of staff.

none of my staff actually teach the students, apart from one exception (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

our specific remit is towards staff so we sometimes end up indirectly supporting students through providing staff with supporting materials (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

In my role we try to support students through staff, because of the numbers, we try to equip staff with what they need to support students. (Respondent E1, Academic developer, 20/08/09)

Site C did see it as part of its remit to provide training relating to technology for students but this was very specific.

The second approach is to offer rewards for the development of teaching, largely through the provision of award schemes, sometimes referred to as teaching fellowships. Most of the units were involved in managing schemes of this type, although these schemes fell into two distinct categories. Schemes in the first category were retrospective, and might be termed "reward" rather than "award", as at sites A and D

There's the [Site A] award for teaching excellence which we run, and we have funding from various sources, and we had an excellent field this year, excellent. Fantastic. … And it awards £5000 to the winners and £2000 to the commendees.

Q: Is it associated with a project, or is it just a reward.

A: No, it's associated with a set of criteria we have four criteria that we look at and obviously the student experience, influencing colleagues, so there's a number of criteria we use, to look at it. We draw a field, and then we look at it, draw a shortlist and then we take the shortlist forward. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)

Every year we have a rewarding excellence ceremony and we have various categories within that. We have a TSL category, we have an "innovations in learning and teaching" category and we have a rising stars category. We've also been asked to look at new researchers, and also we have a category for learner support. What we do is we ask every academic school for the innovation, e-learning and rising star to nominate to us one member of staff for those awards. There's a £600 award plus a certificate. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

Respondent D went on to describe the ceremony in more detail, and stressed that it was very much a celebration of achievement, and that recipients of the award were nominated by their own peer group, rather than by staff of the unit, or by a panel co-ordinated by the unit. Instead, the unit's role was simply one of co-ordinating and organising the ceremony. The second category, award schemes, were characterised by the provision of a small amount of funding for a specific project. This category was more common than the first. All the sites, including Site D, offered this kind of scheme.

"We do have a project scheme but we don't reward it in the same way. We have these learning and teaching projects where people can bid in and they can bid up to £3,000 for any kind of learning and teaching project and we can put categories on it." (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

These schemes were not entirely problem free. Site B for example, did have an award scheme, although the respondent at first claimed they did not, the respondent possibly having misunderstood my question as being about a "reward" scheme

I would say, again this is my personal opinion, partly because of our polytechnic background we were basically a NATFHE institution before the merger, and there's still a strong union element, and they were strongly opposed to any sort of teaching award scheme as being elitist. I think that's the primary reason why we don't have one.(Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

This could be interpreted as a reluctance to privilege managerial perceptions of what constitutes high quality teaching over faculty based perceptions. Yet the respondent then went on to describe just such a scheme:-

> *Other things we have are a scheme called the H_____ awards for excellence in curriculum innovation, and that is administered totally through the unit, so the unit decides what's the theme for this year put out the call and we lead the panel, although it also contains members from outside the unit (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

Sites C and E have or had similar schemes and, in fact, the respondent at site C was themselves the holder of an award, and the criteria at this site also suggested a project based award, albeit with a little bit more flexibility.

> *Essentially what happened was they invited bids in from people who were doing interesting bits of work that could be rewarded with a small amount of money. And that money could be used in almost any way that you wanted to. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

If there is anything in common with the "award" (as opposed to "reward") schemes, across the sites it is a concern about accountability. Sites B and D expressly project manage the schemes funded, because there does seem to be some difficulty in getting results. Site D had a fairly light touch, although site B had found this unsatisfactory, and had tried to tighten procedures. It seems reasonable to infer that the emphasis on accountability at this site originates with the trade union concerns to which Respondent B referred. While there is no objection to "improving teaching and learning" there is a reluctance to be seen to be privileging certain colleagues over others.

> *We (ask) them to write us an interim report and they have to do a report and they have to present to us (respondent D)*

> *We've always tried to project manage them in the sense that people have been required to file interim reports and file completion reports and justify where they've spent the money, and as the money is managed by the unit we know where it's been spent. Over the last couple of years we've made a more explicit attempt to introduce project management procedures into the processes, so we now have a project management pack which we distribute to staff and we have pro-formas that they have to fill out at the beginning and for interim reports and things like that, and that largely is a result of the fact that many of these recipients asked for*

> *money for teaching and what actually happened is that they never got a*
> *chance to do things and the money ended up not being spent (Respondent*
> *B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

This seems indicative of certain insecurity, on the part of the unit, in that learning and teaching have not been developed, unless they have been seen to be developed. There was no sense in any of the interviews of what would have constituted an acceptable report for example, or what, if anything would have caused the unit to withdraw the funding for a project, other than failure to deliver anything at all.

Research and Development

The award schemes described are a form of research into teaching activity. Research necessarily involves an examination of a particular phenomenon, and several respondents said they did challenge practices to some extent:

> *I've also tried to engage staff with the concept of academic literacies…It*
> *isn't "They can't read and write" It's about expectations and*
> *understanding of the subjects, and I think that's helped me very much*
> *articulate, and also helped my relationship with staff because I'm not*
> *coming in and saying "study skills" (Respondent D, Assistant Director,*
> *22/07/08)*

Some of the EDUs approaches to technological innovation could also be characterised as research into teaching practice. There is a fuller description of their approaches to technology in the next section, below, but there is a group of technologies that are particularly relevant to specific aspects of teaching practice, such as the Turnitin plagiarism detection service. Technologies in this group include e-portfolio tools, electronic voting systems for use in lecture theatres, institutional research repositories, and bibliographic management software packages.

In fact, there was not a great deal of discussion of these tools in the interviews. The respondents only referred to Turnitin in any detail. Turnitin is often seen as a way of catching students out, but it is far more effective when used as a teaching tool (Carroll and Appleton, 2001). There was an interesting contrast between sites B and C for example, which arose in the context of the discussion about challenging academic colleagues with respect to technology. Site B took a more managerialist approach,

expecting that there would be either a single policy for dealing with the issue, or at least that there would be formal department policies on the issue.

> *we know more and more people are using Turnitin but very few departments have a policy for it. We don't have a university policy for it and so it comes down in some cases to an individual whereas we think that there should be a formal educational structure to using Turnitin, so we're trying to push that a bit more but its hard going (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

Site C was much more collegial in its approach, having developed a training module which was designed to be delivered via the VLE, using the concept of a car journey as an analogy for the journey through academic life;

> *That's taken up a lot of our learning and teaching committee time, whether it should be used as a remedial tool, or whether it should be a developmental, or a punitive tool...You know, with the car analogy as people were actually running through it. So that's taken a lot of time and that discussion is still going on as to the best use of that. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

The point here is that the unit at site C had spent a lot of time thinking about the best way to use Turnitin most effectively, and had developed something that could demonstrate the value of the approach they were advocating. Both units were aware that academic involvement in the debate was essential, if the issue was to move forward, and were aware that there needed to be some form of policy statement. The emphasis at site C appears to be on a much more collegial, longer term approach, while at site B the emphasis appears more managerialist, tempered by an acknowledgement of the need for collegiality.

How do EDU staff approach the development of colleagues with respect to the use of technology in teaching?

Change Agents

There was evidence that the EDU was an important locus for the support and in some cases management of the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE). This carries some risks for the unit because a VLE represents a major technological investment, which can impose particular working practices on academic colleagues. There is a distinction between technical support of the VLE, which is not usually the

responsibility of the EDU and support for users of the VLE, which is. Respondents agreed that they were involved with design, and support for academic use of the VLE through training and the writing of support material for users. In some cases, as at site C for example, the unit may have a significant input into decisions about what additional services provided by the VLE supplier the university should purchase. This kind of support and management was seen as a specific responsibility of the unit at sites B, C, and E, and to lesser extent at site D.

> *the university management is very supportive of what we are doing. That support is very traditional in focus so we've got WebCT, as our e-learning environment, we've got Adobe Connect professional which serves as a meeting environment, and those are the main things that they care about. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

> *We bought community. We had Learning System for quite a few years…. Community: We found that one of the hardest to really push the asset in terms of the amount we spent on it. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

It's noticeable here that Respondent C felt a post hoc need to justify the purchase of 'Community', indicating again the strength of structural pressures on development units to deliver a particular model of teaching.

Further evidence for this was provided by events at site E. Respondent E1 did explain, prior to the start of the formal interview, that the university was in the process of changing to a new VLE, and that former members of the EDU were tasked with managing and delivering this project. Prior to this, there had been considerable controversy about which VLE should be used. The university had developed an in house VLE, but evidently this had not been a great success, and it had bought Blackboard, a rival commercial VLE. Both of these were now being abandoned and replaced with a third.

> *E2: Yes. And it had been for a long time because even the [in-house VLE]-Blackboard thing was originally was the academics versus the academic services. War. Absolute war.*

> *E1: Blackboard came to the university as a response against [the in-house VLE] really. Academic Services introduced Blackboard because they didn't like the [the in house VLE] people doing the [the in-house VLE] thing.*

E2: One of them, I did get him to admit at 2 o'clock in the morning over some whisky, that he didn't like [the in-house VLE] because he didn't own it basically. So there was a lot of that sort of thing going on, but there had been turf wars for years. Very destructive turf wars. It was always perceived very much sort of.., it was exacerbated by the Blackboard Community and the [the in-house VLE] Community, as if they were completely different, and it was only through a project that didn't get off somewhere that was out of Computer Services, that I got to know people in Health, because they were Blackboard users and I didn't have any means of talking to them. And you know talking to one person "Ooh, we're doing exactly the same thing" but it was perceived quite separately

E1. Exactly. The [the in-house VLE] Servers are hosted in London because they wouldn't look after them here so I said "Let's send them to London" They wouldn't look after them, they wouldn't support them. It was always somebody else's fault because they're not ours.

This extract from the interview has been quoted at some length, as it illustrates how easy it is for educational development units to get involved in institutional politics and how damaging such involvement can be, if not properly managed. In this kind of situation, it is difficult to see what kind of educational development could have taken place, because there was such disagreement about an important medium for development. It also underlines an important challenge faced by an EDU that is trying to act as a change agent, namely, that there will be many powerful interests with different change agendas working, if not against them, at least not in a way that supports them.

As Cornford and Pollock (2003) noted, technology has strong potential to impose specific patterns of working on users. It has also brought to the fore a number of important issues concerning academic practice. One of these is accessibility, the need to provide resources that are in formats that all students are able to access. The Disability Discrimination Act, 1996 requires information providers (including universities) to provide information that anyone can access, irrespective of any physical disability. Accessibility can also be reduced because of the economic status of students. There was not a great deal of evidence that units were responding to these challenges. As respondent D admitted:

…we've never actually taken the bullet and said "You need to have a computer with this amount of processing power, you need to have broadband at home, you need to have a printer on and a colour printer,

because nobody ever wants to say that, but maybe we're moving towards that. We do provide spaces for people who haven't got that but then they have to come in so I think there are some real challenges there. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

There was very little evidence from the interviews that educational development units were engaging with this issue. Site C was conducting a study of the way students and staff interacted with the university's virtual learning environment, with regard to their age, disability, gender, marital status, or ethnic group. Other than this, there was no evidence that any of the units saw themselves as having any responsibility for accessibility despite their interest in technological innovation.

Collegial

EDUS are often associated with introduction of new technologies into the curriculum and there was evidence that they took a collegial approach, in that they tried to ascertain the needs of colleagues, than by reference to any external standard of technological competence. Many of the respondents described how academic colleagues and departments would ask for help with technology.

Quite often now we're hearing the phrase, sorry, academic staff are coming to us and saying "My students on other modules are all saying that they can do this that and the other but they can't do it on my module. How do I do it?" So quite often we're getting that – sort of peer pressure. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)

I can be asked to go in to sort of troubleshoot. I have a technology base so I use the portfolio system and if people want to know how to use that and embed it within their curriculum I've done things like help redesign the study skills module. Then I've helped develop the materials for that module. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)

And they do come from surprising places in an e-learning context. We had somebody from music saying we want to set up an e-learning course. How's that going to work then? (Respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)

An interesting feature of these responses is that the departments requesting support don't appear to be interested in using specific tools in which the institution will, in many cases have invested quite heavily. This may reflect some uncertainty around e-learning in the sector. As Conole *et al*, (2004:43) note, e-learning is often equated

with providing electronic access to learning materials. If students start to ask for technological tools that are unfamiliar to staff, there appears to be a role here for the EDU. It is a site that has a responsibility to keep abreast of technological developments, especially in areas that have potential relevance to teaching and learning, but also to develop strategies for the implementation of such technologies. There was evidence from the interviews that the staff of educational development units did see awareness of developments as an important part of their remit and this is presented in the next section.

A virtual learning environment is often perceived as an important technological investment, and the case studies suggested that an EDU is often given some responsibility for ensuring that a university gains some return on that investment, although there were some differences in the approach taken by the units. The respondent at site D saw the VLE as a tool that they could use in their work, and was not something that they themselves were involved with. They did however imply that the unit had some responsibility for it:

> *One of my colleagues has that particular role. They have a responsibility*
> *for e-learning within the learning and teaching strategy, now the blended*
> *learning strategy. ...I'm not interested in is it built in this software or does*
> *it do this and that. What I want to know is if I wanted to do something*
> *with my students like this what can I do, how can I do it.*
> *(Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

The comment that "one of my colleagues" is responsible for the VLE does suggest that in this institution, the VLE is not seen as being particularly problematic, or an important issue. At site A, a more distributed approach was taken to e-learning, including the VLE:

> *they've embedded four [e-learning] advisors within each faculty, ... some*
> *of whom have gone quite native and have, and do fantastic work*
> *(Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

This contrasts strongly with the other sites where the VLE takes up a lot of the Units' time, and is at the heart of that relationship

> *"we've got WebCT, as our e-learning environment, we've got Adobe*
> *Connect professional which serves as a meeting environment, and those*
> *are the main things that they care about. When it comes to other aspects*

of e-learning, for instance, we don't really do much with computer aided assessment" (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08).

There's other discussions that are going on about accessible teaching, so some people are picking up guidance from, well, they're a sub group of learning and teaching now, about suggestions about what should be the minimum requirements for a module going up. You know, in terms of lecture notes should be up.... If they're going up on the VLE they should be up a week before the lectures actually due, and they should be in this type of format for example (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08.)

Our Virtual Learning Environment was designed within house…. Everybody has to have their work on [the VLE]. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08))

Research and Development

There are of a number of what are sometimes described as "social networking" or "web 2.0" tools , that HEIs can, and do make use of. An important characteristic of all these services is that they are free to access, and that, in many cases, the content is entirely generated by users. While this sounds attractive, they do present some research like problems for EDUs, firstly in terms of keeping up to date with what is available; secondly, in terms of introducing them to colleagues and investigating how they might contribute to teaching practice and if they can contribute, ensuring their implementation into the curriculum and thirdly in terms of managing a service that the institution does not own.

Most of the respondents thought that they did have a responsibility to research into this kind of technology. Respondent B was the only one to state that there was an explicit need to explore web 2.0 services, and the potential that they might have, but the replies of other respondents gave a very strong indication that the units were, or already had taken some steps towards exploring them.

I think there are things that we are obliged to look at. It's clear that things like a VLE and a web meeting systems do offer some sort of value in supporting teaching. I think things like Web 2.0 specifically, I think it's unclear at this moment. I don't think anybody knows, so I think we need to explore it. (Respondent B, Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)

This exploratory, supportive theme was echoed by the other respondents, all of whom saw themselves as having a role in developing web 2.0 services, albeit with some scepticism about why teaching staff were getting involved.

> *No we wouldn't try and discourage it, definitely not. I think we probably do offer some support. Nursing thought they'd do something in Second Life and pulled some esteemed colleagues together. We were there as well. And we tried to drill down to what's the learning problem you're trying to solve. "Well, we thought we'd have a play with it" Perhaps not a good idea. So I think we've got a strong awareness of these tools. We're not supporting people..[in that] we don't run sessions on Facebook as such, but I think we're learning from them as well. (respondent E1 Academic developer, 20/08/09)*

Respondent D in contrast, gave an example of where students had taken the lead, and the unit had actually played no part.

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> *The sign language interpreting students set up a space on Facebook. We didn't do it for them. They did it because they saw a value and a purpose and I think you are seeing more of those kind of things. (Respondent D, Assistant Director, 22/07/08)*

In some respects, this is closer to the spirit of web 2.0, in that it is something that is generated by the users, to meet a need that the users themselves have expressed. The role of the EDU in this kind of situation may be to find ways to help academic staff follow users, rather than to help them to lead users. Yet, there were examples of caution too. Because web 2.0 services are public, and freely accessible, they share some of the dangers often associated with the Internet. Respondent C, gave a very specific example of how the unit was dealing with these issues. Firstly, there was an issue about personal safety:

> *My part of that is actually writing about the digital footprint so we're trying to get students to recognise that it's good to contribute on line, but being aware of what they're contributing online and potentially the security risks of doing that if they get too open. It's getting that balance right. What we don't want to do is to scare them from contributing to the forum, for example, if they've got academic relevance, but not releasing certain bits of information on their Facebook account. (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

Secondly, there was the danger of getting over involved with these technologies. Respondent A described one colleague's reaction to Second Life. The respondent saw

this as being potentially useful, while expressing some personal scepticism about the service:

> *he's a… devotee would be probably not overstating it. Erm, a complete enthusiast, seems to live in Second Life rather than first life as it were. …(I'm) Not going near it myself. So he might say well this is something you could do, you might use this in… or how about., so we do. But we try to be there to support people, but we're not there ramming it down their throats and saying "you've got to do it like this" we're there to support them to find their own solutions to what they're trying to do (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

However the respondents were clearly aware of the inadequacies of the transmission model of teaching, and provided evidence that they were exploiting the potentialities of some of the web 2.0 tools, to promote a more interactive learning environment. The interviews did emphasise how the EDU is working with colleagues to facilitate experimentation, rather than tell them what they should be doing. Examples include the creation of the Academic Technologies Panel at site B, with the creation of a parallel network, and site C, who were actively supporting experimentation.

> *"Quite often people will come to us and ask us about using a particular type of technology and writing something into that, and helping with a podcast or something. We haven't, as yet, had to develop any Second Life islands, although there has been some of our art users, who are interested in doing some virtual displays and so we're thinking of using Education UK who actually offer some islands" (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology, 11/07/08)*

Most of the foregoing extracts suggest that the idea of supporting people, and not "ramming it down their throats" is a philosophy to which most of the units visited subscribe, with regard to the newer technologies. There is undoubtedly a desire to explore, and to help other people explore, but this is an area where there appears to be less external pressure on the development unit to deliver tangible outputs.

A final point to emerge from that the data was that there was general agreement among the respondents that EDUs were not primarily in the business of developing electronic learning content themselves, at least without the involvement of colleagues from the faculties. That is not to say that they are not doing some work in this area, but it is limited.

*I would consider the work that we're doing like the postgraduate award
and so forth, as actually contributing to that enrichment of the learning
experience via the digital media But you know, there's lots of other
people who're part of that. (Respondent A, Centre Director, 29/05/2008)*

*…we have another staff member who is starting to get involved in
developing Flash[2]. Her interest really is in developing more generic off
the shelf applications which may be of use to staff…but it's mostly…the
model is come to us, we'll teach you how to do it and give you some
guidance and support and come back if you need help (Respondent B,
Academic development adviser, e-learning, 17/07/08)*

*Quite often people will come to us and ask us about using a particular
type of technology and writing something into that…helping with a
podcast or something" (Respondent C, Head of Learning Technology,
11/07/08) (Respondent C)*

*What we are more likely to do is if somebody comes to us and says I want
you to do this, is work with them, so they own the solution (Respondent D,
Assistant Director, 22/07/08).*

Site E was slightly different, in that as the unit had been disbanded, there could not be
a structure for the production of materials, although there was still an interest,
tempered by considerable caution.

Respondent E1: But we're also looking at different technologies

*Respondent E2: Yes, in the modules, but I was going to come on to the
more cautionary side of things and that is that I myself am nervous about
staff thinking "oh well, we'll use this that and the other" not realising that
they don't have the… that the support is literally not there.*

All this illustrates a great deal of caution on the part of the EDU about being seen to
impose a normative agenda on colleagues relating to technology, despite the legal
requirements to respect intellectual property rights, and provide usable technology.

Conclusion

The data above strongly suggests that those working in the EDUs that participated in
this research do see themselves as change agents, albeit tempered by a sense of

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[2] Adobe Flash is a tool for developing animations which can then be delivered via a web browser such
as Internet Explorer or Firefox.

powerlessness, and outside the main academic enterprise. There is a feeling inherent in many of the responses, echoed in some of the documentation that the university can and should be improved, and that could be brought about if only academic staff could change their practices. At the same time, there is also a strong sense that attempts to impose change on colleagues would be counter productive, or at best ineffective, so there is a suggestion, since the EDUs visited were not atypical, that EDUs are likely to try to work with, and in some cases mimic, the collegiality of academic life, through working with, and sometimes establishing, committees and working groups.

This sense of insecurity is mirrored in their approaches to the practice of university teaching. Only respondent D described any form of team teaching, and several respondents were very clear that they saw their main client group as academic staff, rather than students. There is a sense of frustration that they can only approach a small number of colleagues, and even where they can influence practice, for example, through the provision of award schemes, it is not always clear how the criteria for what constitutes good teaching are decided upon. In fact it is likely that EDU staff are quite happy to let faculties set the agenda around quality teaching, best exemplified by respondent E1's remark that "We don't tell people how to teach, we like to have conversations".

The data about the EDUs approaches to technology may go some way to explaining this diffidence. As has already been noted, technology does require certain ways of working, and there are attempts to take advantage of this by, for example, insisting that everyone must post their work on the VLE (as at sites C and D). This contrasts with a tendency to retreat into researching into new technologies, in order to discover and exploit their affordances as a service to colleagues. This all suggests that the units do see themselves as service units but, as is discussed in chapter 5, there are other interpretations that can be put on this data.

Chapter 5: Towards An emergent model

Introduction

Recent statements from funding bodies suggest that funders are now expecting to see some return on the investments made in teaching quality enhancement over the past decade or so (Harland and Staniforth, 2008; Selby, 2008; Talis, 2009). A model of how an EDU might effectively provide a return on the investment made in educational development is likely to be a useful tool in demonstrating its value, to both external stakeholders and colleagues within the university itself. This chapter, therefore, examines the extent to which the three models identified in the literature are appropriate for this purpose. The data presented in chapter 4 suggests that EDUs are still finding it difficult to come to terms with the problem of providing a tangible return on the investment made in them. While they are engaging in a wide range of activities, it is rather difficult to identify the focus of that activity. There is an awareness of the need for change, but considerably less certainty about how to bring it about.

As the literature on the function and structure of the university reviewed in chapter 2 suggested, the problem that EDUs face is that there is actually little agreement on what would constitute successful educational development. Demands for change are largely external, and teaching is defined by the demands of different disciplines. If there is no single approach to teaching, it follows that there can be no single approach to introducing technology into the curriculum. The role of the EDU seems unclear. Land (2004) may have characterised educational development as a modernist project, but the change and improvement agenda implied by that is far from explicit. There is some evidence of a modernist approach in the EDU's relationship with technology, especially the virtual learning environment, but this seems to be limited. The themes that emerged from the case studies did suggest that there was some evidence of units trying to provide a service to their university that could be characterised as assisting with the implementation of university policy. However, other themes suggested that the participating EDUs operated by working with academics and support staff, and thus actually modified institutional policy to render it more acceptable to colleagues.

Further, most respondents acknowledged that it was difficult to reach out to more than a relatively small proportion of colleagues. This chapter therefore discusses the validity of the previously identified models from the perspective of the research questions.

What is the relationship between EDU staff's perception of their role and hypothetical models of the university derived from the literature.

The EDU as Change Agent

Both the literature and the findings suggest that EDUs accept that they do have a responsibility to bring about change in the university. The participants in this study shared a perception that their units had been created to bring about change, but that they also felt that their capacity to bring it about was limited, partly because of their small size and their consequent inability to reach large numbers of staff. A response to this seems to have been to get involved in a very wide range of activities, as Gosling (2001), Lueddeke (1997) and the description of the units' responsibilities at site E suggest. The implication is that they are not themselves defining change, but taking a definition from their own institution's organisational culture. Further evidence for this is provided by Respondent A's remark that "the university was having a rethink and thinking 'well, do we want things to still be done in this way'?", and the political manoeuvring that had accompanied the creation of site E. This may well be because EDU's are operating in an area of liminality (Meyer & Land, 2003), that is an area between the different demands of external stakeholders, and of their own organisation where the knowledge they are trying to develop is, to borrow Land's description "troublesome"; troublesome because it undermines practices with which people have become comfortable.

There was also a feeling among participants that the EDU was not a source of policy, as (Gosling, 2001) suggested it sometimes was. Instead, it was a locus for the implementation of policies written elsewhere. This may be an effect of the sampling methodology used in this study, as most of the participants were not heads of their

departments. An exception was respondent D's statement that "The main development…was to deliver the learning and teaching strategy". The development of the units at sites B and C was informed by a desire on the part of the university to expand from a "learning technology" basis, to a much wider focus on teaching innovation. Even though site C then subsequently split back into two separate organisational units, respondent C did stress the continuing close working relationship between the two sections.

It is possible to read into this an idea of the university as something remote, something that a development unit is there to provide a service for, as opposed to something that the development unit is trying to change, the case studies suggesting that those working in EDUs perceive the "university" is, in a sense, external to them. The danger for an EDU though, is that such an attitude risks justifying the depressing quotation from (Jenkins *et al*, 2000) on p 23 about development units "never being able to count themselves among the winners". Of course, they can never be "winners", if they are unable to define what would constitute winning. It follows too that if this is the case they can never be change agents, in the sense of successfully imposing change on others.

Collegial Model

Any small unit in a large organisation has to play a political game in order to survive. There is evidence in the literature that EDUs' are very vulnerable to re-organisation, (Gosling, 2008: 10) and the experience of sites A and E in this study tends to support that. It seems sensible, therefore, for the EDU to work collegially. This is not easy. The quotations from Cameron, (2003) Furedi, (2004) and Becher and Trowler (2001) illustrate how difficult it can be to impose change on a diverse community of disciplinary academics. The remark from respondent A, of staff being compelled to take the university's PGCE course and spending the two years "in a state of deep offence", is further evidence of this difficulty. There is an echo here of the "privileging of local wisdom" identified by Clegg, (2003) and supported by Gosling, (2009). That is the idea, that faculties or academic departments are much better at identifying and meeting their own needs in regard to teaching and learning, than any agency that is external to the faculty, whether that be central government, the local

community or even the central management of the institution. In fact, there is evidence from the data that EDUs work quite hard to overcome this attitude.

First, nearly all the respondents were aware that they were only reaching a limited number of colleagues. Comments about 'frequent flyers' and 'familiar faces' suggest that they do feel a need to include a greater number of colleague in their work. Part of the problem here appears related to the absence of a narrative about what EDUs want to do, related to the phenomenon of academic tribalism identified by Becher and Trowler. (2001) Even at site D, which had perhaps the clearest vision of what the unit was trying to do, there were problems engaging with academic staff. Other respondents were much more cautious about imposing their own models of academic practice, and the respondents at site E were clear that they did not want to be seen as setting an agenda for others. It may only be possible to bring about change incrementally, and then only with the co-operation of academics. This does rather suggest that the EDU is both philosophically and pragmatically inclined to take a more collegial approach to remedying any deficit model.

Further evidence for this comes from the emphasis that the participating EDUs placed on working through committees. Committee membership could be interpreted as a way of accessing institutional power, and thus imposing change by joining the community of practice. The same strategy appears to be used quite effectively to work with local groups, where the EDU initiates the establishment of a committee or working group itself. Where the EDU did want to push some new agenda, participants tried to work within the collegial structure to achieve it by identifying interested colleagues, from both academic staff and support groups, to manage it collectively, rather than by imposing it through mandatory development activities. Further evidence for what could be interpreted as an attempt to create a new community of practice was the admission from site E that: "the person who was put on to the Assessment Committee…didn't know anything about the reality in departments". This suggests that the unit was trying to transform the teaching and learning regimes described by Trowler et al, (2005) but could also be interpreted as searching for a model for its own practice, which it was trying to derive from the academic community. A similar conclusion could be drawn about the creation of working groups around technology at sites B and C . Innovation delivered this way is not

likely to be particularly rapid. As respondent C suggested, a frequent outcome is the establishment of further working groups and committees. The point is that the committee structure of a university provides the EDU with an opportunity to become a more collegial change agent, an opportunity which was frequently taken by participants.

Research and Development

With respect to the university, the respondents did not generally see research & development as a particularly helpful model. While there was some interest in team teaching at site D, and more interest in researching into the affordances of new technology at sites B and C, there was a strong feeling that research, at least as it is understood in terms of the Research Assessment Exercise, was not their primary business. Respondent A even went so far as to state that this kind of research was actually discouraged in their unit, a rather surprising attitude in a Russell Group university. That may be because staff in EDUs are engaged in a very large range of activities and thus research is a lower priority for them.

There was, though, some evidence that a model of research engaged academic development, not unlike the 'research engaged teaching' model proposed by Neary & Winn, (2009) may be emerging, especially at site D. The research-engaged teaching model argues that students and staff become co-constructors of their own knowledge, and owes much to Von Humboldt's (Hohendorf, 1993) conceptualisation of the university. The reference by respondent D to working with a teaching colleague to deliver a paper at a conference in The Netherlands is one example of this. Another, although arguably less successful, is the description of working with colleagues to submit bids for external funding made by respondent C. The respondent actually found it difficult to get colleagues to participate, but the point is that the EDU here sees the involvement of colleagues as essential to work of this nature.

If the EDU is to bring about change, then it has to challenge the practices of the communities of practice with which it works. To do so it has to join them. The committee structure of an institution is one way to do this, and is also the safest place

to advocate new developments. As Lueddeke (1997) pointed out, there is a need for the educational development unit to pay careful attention to the purposes and priorities of the institution in which it is based, if it is to survive. That does not exclude a need to identify and meet the development needs of colleagues whose loyalty to their discipline may be greater than their loyalty to the institution that employs them. There is no sense of research in the sense of researching into a discipline of educational development. Instead the case studies suggest that the EDU is working very slowly, patiently, and pragmatically to bring about change through persuasion, and working through local practices. While this has something in common with Land's (2004) 'domestic' agenda, it is subtly different because it is derived, not from the policies of the senior management of an institution, but from the practice of colleagues. Because this kind of modus operandi inevitably involves the modification of targets, as practical difficulties in projects are met and dealt with, this strategy does run the risk of failing to bring about the tangible changes demanded by funding bodies, at least in a form that they originally envisaged.

How do those working in EDU's conceptualise the enhancement of university teaching?

The findings in chapter 4 suggest that EDU staff see their role as one of bringing about change through working with academic staff. If so, then it follows that their approach to teaching enhancement is likely to be heavily influenced by their relationships with university teachers. Respondents B & E1 explicitly stated that their role was to support students through staff. One way of doing this, is to provide formal training and development events, but there are practical and philosophical difficulties in doing so. Pragmatically, EDUs are too small to provide development activity for all staff. Philosophically, they may have some difficulty in establishing their credibility as experts in teaching and learning, especially where the principal drivers for teaching and learning are the philosophical underpinnings of the academic discipline. The existence of multiple disciplines argues against the development of a single coherent narrative of development, thus leading to the multiple orientations towards development identified by Land (2004).

The EDU as a Change Agent

If EDUs are to change the practices of teaching colleagues, then it would seem logical, as (Harland and Staniforth, 2008) suggested, to expect their staff to be university teachers themselves. However, other than at site D, EDU staff did not teach undergraduates. Disciplinary academics might then ask, with some justice, how the EDU felt it was able to prescribe appropriate interventions when its own staff were not exposed to the practical problems, of administration, student pastoral care and other matters, with which they themselves had to deal. It is therefore quite sensible for an EDU to take a much more cautious approach to teaching enhancement, and the evidence from the other sites indicates that this is the approach that is most often taken.

The respondents all reported a sense of frustration that they found it very difficult to reach out to all their academic colleagues. Only site A had made any attempt to provide staff development for all academic colleagues, and even that, as Respondent A admitted, was based on a deficit model, in which colleagues were perceived as needing training as "what we are trying to achieve is teaching quality". At site E, in contrast, the approach of providing comprehensive staff development had been rejected: "… that phase was just total overkill. It was as if people could spend two afternoons a week at workshops". At site B the respondent stated that the unit "tried to let people (i.e. developers) have their own offices where they can be responsible for one to one training or consulting sessions". This is a more reactive approach, in that colleagues are expected to come to the unit for development, which does rely on colleagues identifying a need for development in the first place. This reactivity may be a reaction to the resentment of imposed models of teaching improvement expressed by Furedi (2004) and Cameron (2003). The message sent out by the EDU thus changes from 'what we need is teaching quality', to 'if you need help with your teaching, we're here to help you'.

Despite these difficulties all the sites do provide development workshops, which arguably require that colleagues actively engage with the EDU's development philosophy but, other than at site A, such workshops were provided at the request of colleagues. The only site that engaged with teaching as an activity that academics

actually do, was site D. Even here, there seemed to be a reluctance to venture too far into what might be seen as "disciplinary" territory, with the respondent stressing that the unit staff were there primarily to help colleagues with things like assessment strategies, and group work, and then only at the request of those colleagues. The EDU's reluctance to claim any special pedagogical knowledge, or any particular authority deriving from organisational position, or even from academic research, was characteristic of the EDU's studied. Further, it suggests some sensitivity to the academic suspicion of the quality agenda identified by Gray and Radloff, (2006). Rather it indicates a more pragmatic willingness to adapt and work with colleagues, exemplified by respondent D's attempt to engage staff with the concept of academic, or disciplinary literacies, as opposed to an externally defined discourse of 'study skills'.

This reluctance to see their clients, whether staff or students, as "needing to be fixed" was a common theme in the interviews, even though the unit itself may be under some managerial pressures to deliver external agendas. A preliminary report on research by Gosling, (2010) suggests that 63.4% of institutions made, or were considering making, the completion of a PGCE a requirement for new staff. Yet compulsion to engage in academic development was only found at sites A and D, and then only for new staff, who were required to obtain a postgraduate certificate in Education. Furthermore, the respondent at site A did state that colleagues often resented that compulsion.   The creation of a formal programme of events originating with the EDU is unlikely to be a viable approach, although that does not preclude the provision of such courses elsewhere in the institution. While the respondents put it down to lack of time or permission, it is quite possible that colleagues simply weren't interested in external agendas, or initiatives that they saw as adding to their workload.

Collegial approaches

If normative approaches to quality enhancement are rejected, other methods must be found if the EDU is to justify its continued existence. One such method, employed by all the sites, was to provide awards for innovative teaching projects. These schemes have been criticised on the grounds that they were not focussed on any consistent idea of quality teaching. Instead they tended to inhibit collaborative working, encouraged

staff to focus on the project that they were being funded for, to the detriment of wider improvements in teaching or, in Stiles' (2006) colourful phrase, "Fred in the Shed" projects. Another weakness is that institutional schemes tended to suffer from poor publicity, and were often inconsistently funded. (Morris and Fry, 2006)

Notwithstanding these objections, the respondents did see these schemes as an effective way of promoting teaching enhancement. This is perhaps more evidence that the EDU is reluctant to promote enhancement that originates outside an academic discipline, to let 'academics be academics in their own way", as Phipps (2005) suggested. In some cases there are different categories of award, site A, for example, having one set of awards for "innovation in learning and teaching" and another for "rising stars", presumably to encourage as many colleagues as possible to apply. There is also evidence of awareness of a need to respond to a managerial agenda, by setting specific criteria for receiving the project funding. Sometimes they are based on projects; Site B, for example, decides the "theme" of the awards each year and invites submissions for projects matching the themes. Site D has a similar scheme, although site C simply invites award winners to support the sharing of effective practice, by attending events at which they can discuss learning and teaching activities with colleagues. Site D does this too, but also offers rewards to staff whose excellent practice in teaching and learning has been recognised by colleagues. This last approach is of particular interest, because it removes any responsibility for deciding what constitutes excellence in teaching and learning from the EDU, and transfers it to the faculties. The unit merely plays an administrative role, organising the awards ceremony, printing the certificates, and distributing the funds to the recipients.

The respondents did express reservations about award schemes. They are small in scale, and the outcomes of such projects are difficult to sustain. Once the funding has been paid over and the project completed, there is a sense that the work is done. There is also a lack of accountability in these schemes, which respondents were trying to address. Sites B and C had instituted more formal reporting processes for their project based schemes, which could be interpreted as further evidence of a lack of confidence among EDUs about a clear narrative of what would constitute an improvement to teaching. If these schemes were not always as successful as they might have been, it is because there was no sense in any of the interviews of what would have constituted an

acceptable report. There is no indication what, if anything would have caused the unit to withdraw the funding for a project, other than failure to deliver anything at all. The reward scheme at site D is an interesting contrast, in that it reflects the collegial life of the university, and celebrates existing practices. This is not to say that award schemes are not a sensible approach to enhancement. They are consistent with an emergent theme of slow, patient, pragmatic approaches to enhancement, based on a respect for disciplinary cultures, rather than an attempt to impose an external normative agenda derived from either fundholders' policies, or theoretical models derived from the literature.

An aspect of collegiality that does not appear to have been extensively discussed in the literature, but emerged very strongly from the data in this study, was the emphasis that the respondents placed in the importance of working with groups of staff in support services. This was less strong in interviews A and E which were both with staff from pre 1992 Universities, than interviews B, C, and D, which were all with staff from former polytechnics or colleges of higher education, and may be a reflection of the more managerial style of the latter identified by Booth (1999). The interview data does suggest that there was relatively little formal contact between the EDU and senior managers, and where there was, it appeared to be conducted largely through the head of the unit. The strong relationships between the EDU and support staff indicate that EDUs have developed a broader understanding of enhancing teaching, and are more focused on a more holistic approach to enhancing the student experience, than is suggested by the university models described in the literature review. The importance of the EDU's relationship with these groups for bringing about change may thus have been underestimated.

The experience of the participants suggests that the deficit model of university teaching, that led to the creation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, is actually a rather simplistic interpretation of the problem. It is not that academics are 'failing', it is not even that the university provides a highly complex, heterogeneous, multi disciplinary context, making it very difficult to build a coherent, constructive narrative of the direction academic development should be taking. An EDU which focuses exclusively on the needs of academic staff may not be taking account of the fact that, as Scott (2005) put it, university teaching is taking on new forms. As a

respondent at site E stated; "I didn't have any means to talk to them" meaning academic staff, implying that the EDU would find it difficult to find out about, let alone respond to these new forms. The descriptions of the reluctance of academic colleagues to attend workshops related by all the participants are powerful indications of the inadequacy of traditional models of development, and there was evidence that those working in EDUs understood this. The unit at Site A, for example, had clearly been reconstructed as a conventional staff development unit, which, as the respondent there admitted, had caused some unhappiness amongst those members of staff taken on as academic developers, a very clear echo of the role discomfort identified by Gosling (2009).

Research and Development

All the respondents were unambiguous in seeing academic staff, rather than students, as their primary client group. There is some evidence in the data that EDUs do deliver some content to students, usually related to a particular technological innovation, or an externally imposed agenda, such as personal development planning, study skills, or employability. Gosling (2001) noted that many units were originally conceived as having a role in this kind of activity, but it was being transferred to more specialist departments. If these things are regarded as academically important, then the challenge is to find ways of integrating them into the academic curriculum, rather than transferring responsibility for them to an external support service. This illustrates a risk of the collegial approach for EDUs, and support units more generally, in that in providing a service to staff, they may actually be undermining the quality of teaching, by removing essential elements of academic practice from the curriculum.

The implication that seems to be emerging from the data, then, is that the EDUs accepted its responsibility to implement policies that have originated elsewhere, but this is qualified by a reluctance to disturb the status quo in academic departments through research into teaching. Any such research that EDUs do, is almost always done with staff, as at Site D, where the respondent emphasized the unit's role in team teaching. It could also be argued that the teaching award schemes provide an opportunity for a form of action research, but the concern of respondents about the

lack of accountability of these schemes suggests that it is not one that has been widely taken. There was no evidence in the interviews of the research cycles characteristic of action research. Yet the literature may suggest ways forward for the EDU, to do more to develop a research engaged model of development. Many of the respondents themselves had academic backgrounds, but few of them felt they were useful in their current role. Respondent B, for example, remarked that it was a long way from researching in physics, to conducting research into teaching. Nevertheless, Clegg (2003) found that that academic staff place a higher value on local practical wisdom, namely that inherent in their own discipline, than they do on policy and theoretical knowledge derived from the "centre", that is the central management of a university, the state, or even the research literature. Macfarlane's (2009) study of the move of the EDU at Thames Valley University in to the university's graduate school and the experience of the author's own unit at Lincoln, which was started out as a "Best Practice Office", became a "Teaching and Learning Development Office" and now forms part of the "Centre for Educational Research and Development", both imply growing sectoral interest in a more research oriented approach.

The respondents gave little credence to the idea that change, or development, in teaching practice is something that can be imposed by a set of practices that the EDU can enact, whether it is informed by research or not. Rather, they emphasised the value of working collegially, in particular through relevant committees and through funding teaching enhancement projects. There is a strong sense that development work with regard to teaching, needs to involve a community beyond academic staff, either to enhance technological provision, or to understand the implications of intellectual property or collection management, especially with regard to funded projects and award schemes. Interestingly, given the emphasis on collegiality, there was relatively little interest in conducting mutual research into teaching *per se*, although as is discussed in the next section, research into the affordances of a new technology was seen as a far more appropriate activity for an EDU. There is a definite sense among the respondents that the EDU has a role in responding to academic concerns about how they might best use technology in their teaching.

119

How do EDU staff approach the development of colleagues with respect to the practice of introducing technology into their teaching?

It is in the area of technology that the data suggests the EDUs sense of self appears to be strongest. There is a much clearer understanding of what technology can do, and an emergent narrative of how it can be used to help colleagues enhance their teaching. It is not hard to find, in the literature and popular press, pejorative characterisations of those who do not use technology as "Luddites" (e.g. Wilson, 2003), and in the author's experience, some academics describe themselves in such terms. Apart from the historical inaccuracy of the term (organised machine breaking is uncommon in universities!), this kind of pejorative characterisation of individuals underestimates the considerable challenges involved in familiarising oneself with new technology (Shephard, 2004:44). It is significant that none of the respondents used that term, or any equivalent. That again seems to be an indication of their understanding that integrating technology into teaching is not a simple matter, and also indicates a preference for broadly collegial approaches to development.

Change Agent models

Technology does carry some inherent tendencies to define how things should be done. Most obviously, there are certain levels of competence to be achieved before it can be used to significant effect, although this did not seem to be a major concern for the respondents. It has been suggested (Kandlbinder , 2003) that academic developers themselves have a tendency to follow traditional methods, measuring success by the number of lecture notes posted on a Virtual Learning Environment, number of handouts printed and so on, although the interviews suggested that this was only partially true. Site A, certainly, took a very traditional approach to development, but the other sites displayed more flexibility in responding to demand from faculties. Furthermore, as (Cornford and Pollock, 2003:42) suggest,certain working practices have to be much more tightly defined in order to be successfully automated. A mandated introduction of technology can thus be interpreted as an attack on academic freedom, in that it can dictate in some detail how academics go about their work. A content management system for example, will, by its very nature, tend to place the

emphasis on teaching as the "delivery of content".

Universities have made considerable efforts to provide access to technology via the provision of computer laboratories and learning resource centres, and providing suites of software that facilitate study, such as word processing, access to bibliographic databases and so on. All this, however worthwhile, does not, as respondent D noted, help the student who has family responsibilities that preclude the purchase of equipment and may only be able to study late at night, or the member of staff with, for example, a visual handicap that prevents them from seeing particular types of screen-based visual displays. There are, of course, legal obligations on providers of information to ensure that all users can access their content (Disability Discrimination Act, 1996), and legislation about Freedom of Information and Copyright also reinforce the tendency of technology to force specific patterns of working.

Given the heavy investments universities have made in technology, the legal requirements associated with it, and its own inherent inflexibility, it was unsurprising to find evidence that EDUs had been involved in attempts, albeit tentative, to impose technologies on colleagues. This had had negative consequences at site E, where the respondents implied that the turf wars over which VLE to use had been partly responsible for the demise of the unit. Less dramatically, asides from respondents C and D, about everybody being expected to have their work on the VLE, do suggest some rather low key, cautious attempts to impose technological change. The respondents did not state what would happen if colleagues did not 'have their work on the VLE'. It should be pointed out that this is not entirely a matter of imposing change. Technological developments also bring with them a level of uncertainty about how things should be done, and academic colleagues may welcome some form of central direction in this case.

Collegial approaches to technology

While most of the respondents betrayed considerable enthusiasm for the potential that technology provided, there was very little evidence that they saw instrumental and managerial approaches as useful. They were not attempting to pursue such

approaches, other than the vague expectations about posting work on a VLE, referred to above. Hence the collegial approach adopted by the units in this study, appears to be seen as a practical way forward. To paraphrase site B, the Educational Development Unit has to concern itself with what academics "care about", and that entails spending time working with them to find out what that might be. That is difficult and time consuming, and may account for the emphasis on group working, evidenced by the formation of working groups and committees at sites B, C and D.

All the respondents expressed a desire to work collegially, but there is a recognition that large monolithic technical systems do impose an inherently managerialist agenda. The response of the EDU to this is either to find ways of fitting the VLE to meet the demands expressed by colleagues, by buying additional packages or modules as at site B and C, finding other ways of doing what needs to be done as at site D, or by acquiescing in the redistribution of support for e-learning among the faculties as at site A. The responses from sites C and D about the VLE do suggest that there is an implicit standards agenda, where not only is everyone expected to use the VLE, they're expected to do it in a certain way. The fact that such an agenda is needed, does offer some support for the argument made by Avolio *et al*, (2001) that technology is being subverted in ways that its designers did not expect, but the question for the EDU is whether such subversions are, in fact, contributing to an enhancement of teaching quality. There was little evidence, anywhere in the data, of EDU staff taking advantages of the shift in perceptions of technology identified by Uys and Campbell (2005), that is, moving from being something which facilitated the provision of content, to something which facilitates the discussion of content.

That may be because perception of technological affordances is not yet sufficiently pervasive in higher education. The limitations of collegial approaches to the introduction of technology are similar to the limitations of the change agent model. First, EDU staff's perceptions of teaching practice are heavily influenced by their relationship with academic staff and thus innovation may be submerged by perceptions of what can practically be achieved. They are, as respondent B put it, simply 'guns for hire'. Secondly, the EDU can only reach a small section of the community and so they are only able to reach the "frequent flyers", to use respondent A's term. If that is the case, then EDUs that take a purely collegial approach are

unlikely to be able to satisfy the demands of external stakeholders for rapid tangible change across the university.

Research & Development

There is potentially a shift from delivery of content to a more critical and reflective practice in academic learning, which is likely to be exacerbated by the growth in socially created sources of information. The respondents all saw themselves as having a responsibility to investigate innovative technologies and to support their use in colleagues' teaching. They had a small evangelical role in relation to some of the newer "Web 2.0" technologies, but they are certainly not in the business of forcing new ideas onto teaching colleagues or insisting that they use a specific technology. Technology is one of the few areas where the work that educational development units do is largely congruent with the Humboldtian "research informed" model of the university. It does go some way beyond that though, as the research has the potential to be informed by input from almost everybody in the university. There is evidence in the data that the EDU does see it as part of its role to find out what the technologies can do, and to work with colleagues to test the theory in practice. All of the respondents either had, or were considering, exploring technologies that were external to the university, technologies, such as Facebook and Second Life, although in terms of actual work with colleagues, this appeared to have been limited to small scale projects. Most of these projects were related to the teaching award schemes discussed above, and thus were again, evidence of attempting to bring about change by working with the academic community rather than imposing change upon it.

The evidence, then, does not entirely support a model of an EDU as a Research & Development laboratory. There are certainly some similarities, especially with regard to technological experimentation, as respondents clearly thought that they had a duty to look at new technologies. There is some pressure from outside on them to do so. The reports produced by JISC, for example, create an expectation that universities will at least evaluate new technologies, although equally EDUs and others in the university have been accused of indulging in 'hobbyism', (TALIS, 2009). The source of this accusation is apparently that their investigations into new technologies have

not so far borne fruit. However, that is not grounds for entirely rejecting the model of the Research and Development Unit, although the emphasis appears to be more on development than research. JISC, for example, are quite clear that they expect to learn as much from the unsuccessful projects they fund, as from the successful ones. (JISC, 2003) The model fails when the interview data is considered. All the respondents expressed a reluctance to impose discoveries on colleagues, no matter how well-informed the change might be, seeing their role as being to persuade colleagues to undertake the research activity themselves in the context of their own practice.

Conclusions

The research questions were conceived as a way of arriving at a model of how the EDU went about the business of bringing about change in a university, through enhancing the quality of teaching, and through the introduction of new technologies into the curriculum. The literature suggested three possible approaches to this, acting as a normative change agent, acting collegially with academic staff, or perhaps fulfilling a role that had something in common with a commercial research and development unit.

The findings, however, do not fully support any of these models, although each contains elements that may contribute to the construction of a more accurate model. The EDU seems to conceptualise the university as a source of policy which it has a role in implementing. Nearly all the respondents saw the university as an institution which provided a service to the community, and implicitly saw their own role as repeating this on a smaller scale. It was their role to provide a service to their community, that is, the university. They, thus, felt that it was not their business to try and tell the community what kind of services it wanted. This contrasts sharply with the desire of the funding bodies to change the university, so that it provides a very specific services in particular to local businesses, as the Higher Ambitions paper (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009) suggests it should. Instead they tried to work with academic colleagues on a more collegial basis, to interpret these requests for change in a mutually acceptable way.

There are also limitations to a collegial model. First, EDUs are too small to develop a truly collegial praxis. It is not physically possible for them to work with all their colleagues, and thus there is something of a tendency to work with people who are already familiar with them and share their acceptance of a need for development. Second, where they do try and reach out further, there is a need to avoid alienating potential colleagues, by taking the sort of normative approach described above. The risk is that, rather than true collegiality, interpreted as different interests working together, power simply shifts to influential groups within the college. As the EDU is relatively weak in this situation, it is unlikely to be able to achieve significant change without at least making a number of compromises.

The research and development model is also inadequate. While there is a great deal of evidence that EDUs do engage in this kind of activity, there is less evidence of how it goes about disseminating the results of any research, or indeed of proving that it has any benefit. That implies a need to work collegially, as the reliance on teaching awards suggests. They are, after all, a way of distributing research and development across the university. The drawback is that as conceived so far, they have proved largely unsustainable. If these models are not able to describe how the EDU operates in the context of the modern university, is there another model that is able to do so? This is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 6: The Domesticated EDU.

The research questions were derived from the premise that those working in the EDU were likely to be influenced by their conceptualisations of the nature and purpose of the university. The closest of the models of the university to the current reality for EDUs is, perhaps, that suggested by Von Humboldt (Hohendorf, 1993). Drawing on the case study data it is possible to see the EDU as making a significant contribution to an environment where colleagues learn from each other and from students. Crudely put, the EDU acts as the teacher in this model, while academic colleagues are cast as "students". Importantly this is done inside the institution, rather than being imposed from outside. This also brings some elements of Newman's notion of the university as a community of scholars into the model, in that the work of the EDU involves multiple faculties. All of this implies that the EDU ought to be able to effect large scale change across the university, but the findings suggest that this is not the case.

The case studies suggest that the genesis of EDU staff's understanding of the university is much more pragmatic responding to what are perceived as current realities, rather than arising from past models. Generic debates about the nature of the university may obscure a practical struggle over the respective power of different agencies inside it. There is a range of departments, faculties, support and service departments, each of which can exercise varying degrees of power over its immediate environment. Individual members of staff are also able to exercise some control over the teaching methods that they decide to adopt or which learning materials they deliver to students. There are some limitations to this. Some of the respondents, for example, referred to institutional expectations about the placing of learning materials on a VLE.

Therefore, the case studies suggest that one of the challenges facing an EDU may be to reconcile powerful expectations about the purpose of a university, with the pragmatic considerations of working inside any given institution. If the unit is tasked with bringing about change, then its role will include finding out where the sources of power within the institution are, in order to work most effectively with them. The case studies demonstrated that participants found this approach impractical, and instead had a strong preference for working collegially to bring about change. This approach

does run the risk of allowing the change agenda to be redefined by the college to support powerful interests within it. A consequence of this, is that the EDU begins to perceive itself in the light of potentially unrealistic perceptions held by others, and, put simply, attempt to do too much.

Whatever the EDU is asked to do, an implication of the findings is that it needs to do it within the constraints of a complex internal environment, where disciplinary considerations are paramount and balances of power are constantly, and sometimes subtly, shifting. The need is for a unit that is able to interpret the external demands being placed on the university, and interpret them in such a way that the university is able to meet them. It may not be enough for a unit to focus solely on academic development activity. That may go some way to explain the lack of enthusiasm expressed by the respondents for providing programmes of workshops, for example. A further implication is that the unit also needs to be at the centre of the university, interacting with all the players in the political structure of the institution, while also reacting to initiatives that are generated elsewhere. This would also suggest that units' research and development activity, while important, and certainly not excluded, is not a sufficient basis on which to build a model adequate to the task of bringing about widespread change.

A new model

The problem for the EDU posed by external conceptualisations of what universities are, or should be, is at heart, a problem of what is expected of it. Some of the responses from the participants betray a certain anxiety about meeting expectations. These expectations are essentially derived from a particular model of change, owing much to what might be described as a technical industrial conceptualisation of change. The application of sufficient power and resources to manufacturing processes has revolutionised human society in the last three centuries. On the face of it, there is no reason why the same principles should not be applied to the transformation of university teaching.

While one cannot draw overly general conclusions from what is a relatively narrow evidence base, it is not unreasonable to infer that the difficulty for the EDU, is that it

does not have access to sufficient power and resources to initiate large-scale change and, even if it did, it would still need to derive a philosophy of educational development from somewhere. There is a growing community of practice around educational development, but the respondents did not seem to draw extensively on this, focussing more on their role within their institutions. As the EDU cannot impose change from a position of power, it is forced to work more collegially, although this runs the risk of diluting its own change agenda. Further, its own research and development activity appear to be insufficient to give it adequate credibility as a change agent. The evidence from the cases in this study then suggests that the model of an EDU as a harbinger of large scale, externally mandated, change may not be appropriate.

What appears to have emerged from the evidence is a picture of a unit that works on a smaller scale, responsive to the expressed needs of its institution. This has led to the construction of a model that owes something to the pre-industrial economic unit of the "household" which was small in scale, engaged in a mixture of specialised and generic "domestic" economic activity that met the needs of the community it served (Laslett, 1990). The analogy is not exact but the similarities are sufficient to justify using the name for the model described here.

The purpose of modelling the EDU is to provide a representation of the EDU in the 'real' world, that fundholders, senior managers, academic staff, or developers themselves can access and use to describe and, hopefully to predict, the effect that the presence of the EDU will have on various policies. In previous chapters, various models implied by the literature were examined, and found to be, if not inaccurate, at least inadequate to describe the work of the EDU, largely because they were based on a post-industrial conception of organisational change. The purpose of the Household Model is, therefore, to provide as accurate a description as possible of how an EDU goes about meeting, and to a certain extent modifying, the objectives imposed upon it. There is a small limitation inherent in this type of modelling. All models are imperfect, because the modeller has to make decisions about which aspects of the system being modelled to include. For example, the model presented here is derived from the perspective of those who work in the EDU, rather than those who use its services.

The Household Model

Figure 6.1 summarises the household model and shows how the EDU may assist in the reinterpretation of external imperatives in a way that does not engender resistance to them. Rather than impose externally determined change agendas on individual teaching and learning regimes, it works with specific communities of practice, to bring about change that is perceived to be needed. There are some similarities with the domestic orientation to educational development identified by Land, (2004) in that the suggestion here is that the work of the EDU tends to be focussed primarily on its home institution. The model presented here, is descriptive and explanatory, in that it demonstrates how central imperatives are recycled and rendered more acceptable, through a feedback loop involving communication with different communities.
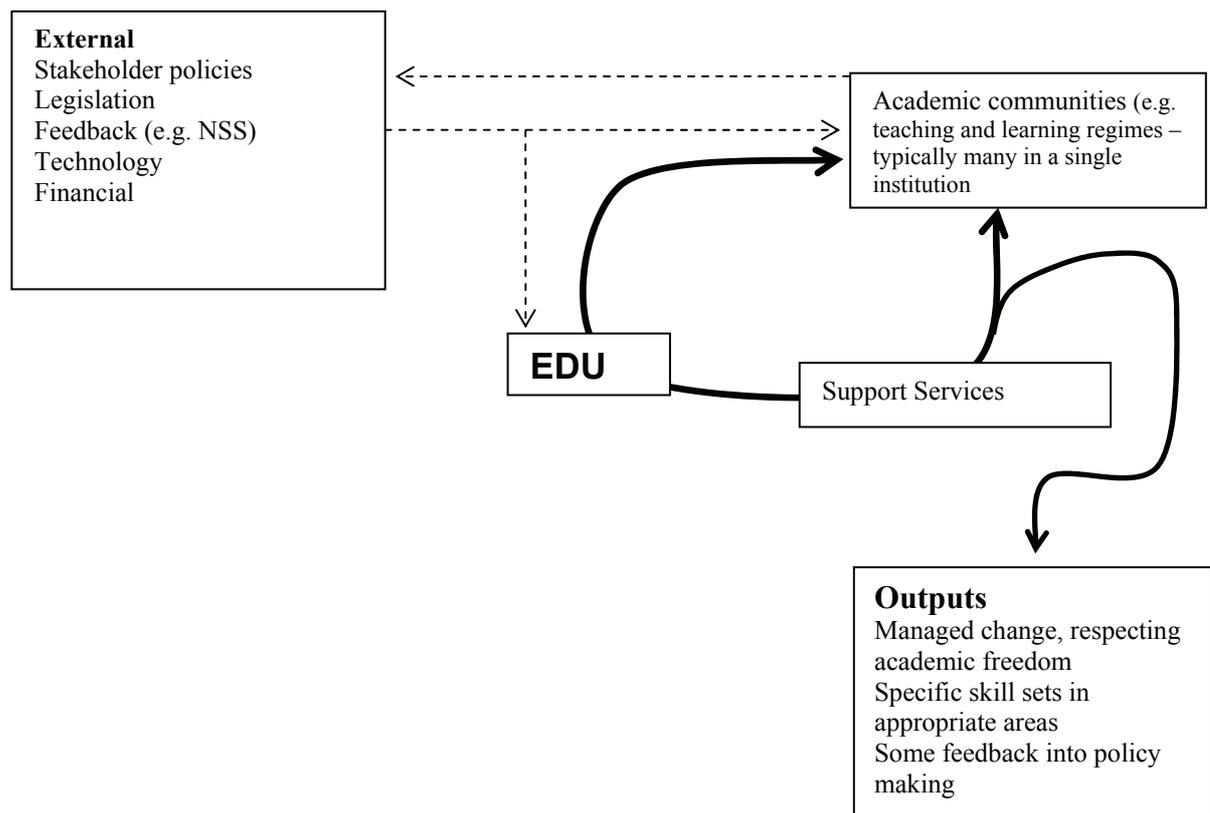
Figure 6.1: The Household Model

While the analogy with the pre-industrial household is far from exact, there are four similarities that have implications for the way that the unit works. First, there is often a head of department who deals with senior management, and thus many of the

external imperatives that exert pressure on the EDU, much as the head of a household would have dealt with other heads of household, leaving other members of the household to get on with their tasks. The absence of the head from the discussions in many of the interviews does seem to echo this kind of laissez-faire practice. Secondly, both are small in size, and thus are able to specialise in distinctive tasks. Because the EDU has little power itself and is not tied to any one discipline it can become a locus of expertise in generic educational technologies. These might include the Virtual Learning Environment, tools such as Turnitin, electronic voting systems or e-portfolios. Other, larger central departments, such as a library, or a computing services would find it difficult to support these, given their other responsibilities. Thirdly, where skills are needed, but unavailable, both employ people with specialised skills (as a pre-industrial household might have employed a 'journeyman') for specific tasks. In the case of the EDU, an example would be the use of the teaching award schemes. Finally, both provide highly specialised services. The household might have concentrated on a very specific craft, and there is some evidence in the data that the EDU is trying to do something similar, moving towards specialisation, in technology at sites B and C, providing training at site A, and in team teaching at site D.

One of the strongest findings, whose importance was agreed upon by all the respondents, was the need to work with staff who worked outside the academic faculties. This could be interpreted as being akin to the development of the craft skills that a pre-industrial economic household had to offer in order to survive, or as respondent B described it offering itself as 'guns for hire', that is meeting specialised needs expressed by a local community. It is also indicative of an understanding that any deficit model of university teaching cannot solely be explained by the alleged failings of academic staff, but that its origins lie instead in the organisational structures of a university. The participating EDUs, because of the nature of their work, maintain relationships with a variety of support services, which may be less immediately accessible to staff in faculties. This may explain the relative absence of any discussions of the profession of educational development from the interviews, since the respondents seemed to give more weight to local issues, than to theoretical professional matters This is likely to have considerable benefits in assisting faculties to take advantage of the services that support units can offer because, as Nimmo &

Littlejohn (2009) suggested, innovations are unlikely to be sustainable if they emerge from single projects, such as those funded through teaching award schemes.

One implication of the household model, is that it is more appropriate for the EDU to concentrate on a relatively small number of areas, by identifying those that are likely to prove most fruitful in bringing about significant enhancements. There is evidence in both the literature and the data that this is being done. Around the turn of the 21st century, EDUs were widely associated with what are sometimes called "study skills". Gosling (2001) noted that, even then, units were tending to move away from this area, something confirmed by the insistence of several respondents that they worked with students through staff, and respondent D's emphasis on rebranding this as 'academic literacy'. In terms of the model, this last is a good example of the unit quietly losing a service that its clients do not want, or at least would prefer that somebody else addressed, and instead, as at site D, rebranding it into something that they find more acceptable.

There is one important aspect of the model where the analogy with the household is perhaps less accurate, although it does not invalidate the model. This is the emphasis that was placed by all the respondents on working with faculties, partly through the committee structure, but also through trying to be flexible enough to meet faculty needs. This may be a survival mechanism, since it is harder to close a department whose staff is well known to colleagues, than it is to close a remote department which simply descends on faculties making theoretical pronouncements about how they might improve their teaching. It seems more likely, though, that it is actually a mechanism that builds communities of practice around educational development, whether with regard to technology or some other aspect of teaching. The benefit of such a community is that it has the potential to cross boundaries between faculties, and between faculties and service departments, effectively breaking down barriers between them.

The strong preference for collegial working evident in the data also undermines any attempt to develop a single, large-scale, model of an EDU that is applicable across different institutions, again something that reflects the flexibility of the Household Model. Site A was much more like a traditional staff development unit, than the other

131

sites, whereas site C, had split technological enhancement and 'teaching and learning' into two separate, although closely linked, units. Site B appeared to emphasise technology, whereas site D concentrated on supporting colleagues in their teaching. The unit at site E had been disbanded, but even here there had been an attempt to continue teaching and learning support through a web site, and one of the respondents remarked that they thought the result of disbanding the unit had been that;

> *This university has gone backwards in terms of e-learning (Respondent E2, lecturer in on line learning and education, 20/08/08).*

All of this points to the need for some sort of unit to deal with these issues, but not one that is based on a centralised model of how change is effected. What appears to have happened, even at the more traditional EDUs at sites B, C and D, is that they have reconceptualised themselves along more localised lines that reflected their relationships with their host university.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the pre-industrial unit household, as an economic unit, is that it was much smaller in size than a factory, although they were much larger than the modern domestic unit, taking in journeymen and skilled craftsmen to supplement the labour of the immediate family. The latter is somewhat analogous to the practice of distributing the work of educational development around the faculties, through teaching award schemes. Some of the more skilled work, that is, work that requires disciplinary input is thus farmed out to faculties. The EDU's role appears to be to stimulate development work outside the unit as much as to carry it out itself. This may be related to the fact that EDUs are simply not large enough to act as catalysts for change, in the way that the TQEF appeared to imply they should. The reluctance of nearly all the respondents to engage in the practice of bidding for external funding for development projects, suggested that they did not see this as an entirely appropriate activity. While they all engaged in it, albeit to a lesser extent at site A than the others, they all felt that it was a distraction from their main activity. Where such bids were successful, several respondents acknowledged that they found that it was difficult to manage the projects. Indeed, one of the respondents at site E admitted that, in one case at least that a project that had been successfully bid for was not completed.

Yet, for the EDU to survive, it has to be perceived as a source of sufficient expertise on a number of topics. As both the literature and the data show, EDUs may have given in to the temptation to take on too many areas of work. The retreat from student support activity has already been noted. Nevertheless, EDUs, are still involved in teaching, curriculum development, quality assessment, academic staff development programmes, including in some cases a PGCE, the co-ordination and dissemination of good teaching practice, via award schemes, policy development, educational research and, of course, technological innovation. Not only does a unit need to do all this, it needs to do it in a way that is sustainable. It seems inevitable, then, that the only way to make progress is to be a great deal more selective about what it takes on. That decision is inevitably contingent upon local priorities. The debates described in chapter 2, about the nature and purpose of the university, argue that there is no universally applicable model of either a university, university teaching, or an educational development unit. However, given the importance of the EDU to the successful development of many aspects of a university's work, the small scale, flexible model described here appears to offer the best possible description of how an EDU fits into what is a very complex and diverse organisation.

Status and significance of the household model

It is acknowledged that the evidential basis for the claims made for the household model is relatively narrow, and given this fact no claim is made that the household model is in any sense normative, in that it is a prescription for how EDUs should be organised, nor even that it is descriptive of EDUs in general. Rather, it is an attempt to model how some EDUs have responded to an external environment characterised by demands for changes to the practices of university teaching, and may therefore provide useful guidance for those working in EDUs in a similar environment. There are some indications in the literature that something akin to the household model might be appropriate, Clegg's emphasis on the importance of local wisdom, discussed on page 30, Newman's emphasis on the importance of the autonomy of the disciplines and thus on respect for academic freedom discussed on page 33, and Land's argument about the need for units to secure support in what are largely political cultures in higher education institutions. (p36)

There was considerable evidence from all the cases that the EDUs visited were responding to these changes. All the respondents saw themselves as playing a role in

the community (p63), which implies that they see themselves as part of the university community. Their role varies, but there is a common theme, that of bringing together different interest groups to address particular issues, even where the political climate was antithetical to this approach, as at site E. The discussion of how the unit at this site dealt with the political battles over the virtual learning environment contained a telling anecdote about finding out that people in different areas were doing exactly the same thing, something the unit only discovered through a development project. (p91)

What the respondents in the case studies, other than at site A appeared to be trying to do was to create a sense of the educational development unit as a place to which colleagues could come to for help, although that help was limited to particular areas of expertise which were seen as belonging to the unit. This might suggest that the household model is another way of conceptualising the EDU as a service unit, (reference) configured to meet the needs of academic colleagues, but as Gosling and D'Andrea (2005:202) observe this kind of conceptualisation does not necessarily lead to any sort of role in undertaking or supporting academic work. It is quite telling that at site A, which did have a more formal, and thus more normative, staff development agenda, providing a training service, e-learning advisors had been distributed to work in the faculties. (p93)

The model is presented in order to provide a way of thinking about educational development units and how they can bring about change in the university by acting as something more than a service unit. All models of educational development are heavily influenced by the organisational context which itself affects attitudes to change, and thus how an EDU responds to change, as was evidenced by the high number of references to relationships that emerged in the coding process (see the data analysis section on pp60-61). It follows therefore that it will be useful to compare the model with other models in the literature to see how it relates to them.

The household model also bears some similarity to Land's (2004) interpretive hermeneutic orientation held by some educational developers, in which, Land argues, they adopt a dialectic approach holding intelligent conversations with colleagues in order to balance different views, and surface local practices. The outcome of this interaction is a critical synthesis of the values of the developers and production of new

134

shared insights and practice. Clearly the value placed by the respondents on working with colleagues, and the emphasis placed in web sites and documents on the role of the EDU in meeting the needs of colleagues, rather than pathologising them as technologically inadequate, reflects this orientation. Where the household model differs is in the sensitivity the respondents displayed to the limitations of what could be done with technology, exemplified by Respondent C's observation that university IT departments were often seen as "the bad guys" preventing academics, (and learning technologists) innovating. The household model suggests that the 'intelligent conversations' of Land's model are held with much wider groups of people, ranging across the entire academic community.

The work of the EDU with regard to the scholarship of teaching and learning is also discussed, although they do not describe it as such by Gosling and D'Andrea,)2005, 201-6) They note the complexity of the role of EDUs in terms of aligning quality enhancement with quality assurance, and suggest that in some cases there is a clear remit to both undertake and promote pedagogical research" (*ibid*: 201-2). They go on to argue that

> *"there must be recognition that teaching is a disciplinary,*
> *interdisciplinary or professionally based activity and that the nature of*
> *'development' must be contextualized within the specific values, purposes*
> *and contexts of the disciplinary teaching being undertaken. This means*
> *working in partnership with teachers to both stimulate and facilitate*
> *improvement by providing specialist expertise on broader higher*
> *education issues and knowledge." (Gosling & D'Andrea, 2005:203)*

Drawing on the case study data, one might reasonably add "technological enhancements to learning" to the list of areas of specialist expertise, and studies of other EDUs may identify further areas. The household model emphasises both respect for disciplinary traditions, in that the EDUs in this study were anxious to avoid being seen as imposing normative models of teaching on colleagues, while at the same time, were keen to be seen as sources of support for particular areas of expertise. Sites B and C for example had tried to exploit the academic preference for collegial working through the establishment of working groups to focus on aspects of technological development. While Gosling and D'Andrea note the increasing complexity of higher education, and educational development, they do not themselves offer a model. This

study, and the emergent household model therefore goes some way to providing a model that describes how the recognition that Gosling and D'Andrea call for might be secured.

It should be acknowledged that there are more managerial models of the EDU in the literature. Thompson's concern for having "hard-edged tools to demonstrate effectiveness" (p5) is an example of this. She quotes one respondent who suggests a "premiership" model, comparing the role of a head of department to that of a football team manager.

> *"It's not just about strategy, motivation and scoring goals, it's also about booking coaches and hotel rooms, negotiating pay claims, scoring goals and getting bums on seats"* (Thompson, 2004:53)

The case studies did not entirely support this model, although this may be related to the evidence base, which contains a significant element derived from interviews with developers who are not heads of department. The household model may not be able to provide hard evidence of effectiveness, but it does provide a route into a second, very important aspect of survival that Thompson also identifies.

> *"You have to make sure that your allies can and do talk about your work….They need to be ambassadors for the effectiveness of the unit with other staff, with managers and with other stakeholders."* (Thompson, 2004:54)

To conclude it should be reiterated that the household model is not presented as a prescription for how EDUs should be organised, but instead as a description of how the EDUs in this study have attempted to negotiate the complexities faced by educational development in English universities, in the first decade of the 21st century The emphasis it places on co-operation with and respect for the values of the disciplines, coupled with the use of its own expertise or craft, to build positive relationships, and alliances seems both pragmatic and achievable and may offer wider lessons for the leadership of universities. The model does present some implications for the practice of educational development, and these are discussed in the next section.

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Implications for practice

First, attempts to change teaching practice through policy development, training, change advocacy, or modelling change are unlikely to meet with universal success. It is possible that limited success might be achieved in some areas, but the university is too diverse an organisation for normative approaches to be successful, or to bring about sustainable change. The household model suggests that EDUs, therefore, may be wise to focus less on the requirements of external stakeholders, and more on the communities of practice within its own institution. This does appear to be happening. There was no sense in the interviews that respondents felt themselves under explicit pressure to deliver quantifiable, externally set, targets. Even at site E the demise of the unit does not appear to have been directly related to a failure to achieve a particular benchmark, but more to do with a failure to understand the subtleties of internal power struggles. Yet there was evidence from the university's web site that the activities of that unit were not felt to be meeting the university's needs. The restructuring of site A into something more akin to a traditional staff development unit does suggest a certain impatience with the idea of "educational development". One might argue that this impatience arises from the EDU presenting itself as able to effect change on an industrial scale, and subsequently failing to do so.

Nevertheless any university is required to achieve certain benchmarks and its EDU, however configured, has a clear role to play in assisting it achieve them, rather as a department in a commercial company may have a quantifiable role in contributing to the company's profits. The difference is that the university has considerable freedom in interpreting what those benchmarks might mean. The implication is that the approach that units take to the development of colleagues is informed by what might be termed a "corporate" model of the university, but this is very strongly tempered by an understanding that they themselves are not in a position to force change on teaching colleagues. However, if the unit is valued by teaching colleagues, then it is in a stronger position to lay a claim to whatever funds are available. The TQEF did not directly fund EDUs, but many universities saw them as an appropriate use of that funding stream. Local relationship building as indicated by the Household model seems a sound tactic in ensuring that funds continue to be directed towards the EDU.

Further, most of the respondents were sceptical about the value of centrally provided programmes of staff development, preferring to provide workshops that were requested by faculties. This suggests that an implication of the household model is that an effective strategy might be for units to concentrate on finding out what the development needs of academic colleagues might be. This is not so much a matter of asking them through surveys and similar techniques, which do run the risk of being interpreted as pathologising academics as failing. This approach is tempting, since it is easier to present a list of workshops delivered, or training sessions held, than it is to identify a need for clear changes in other peoples' practices (Kandlbinder, 2003). A better approach is to actively develop an understanding of the teaching and learning regimes which they are supporting, and the institutional facts that drive them. This can only be done through engagement with issues inside departments and faculties. EDU staff do seem, through their work with academic committees, to be in a strong position to do this, by developing a network of contacts which can be used to explore the demands of the academic college.

At the same time it is important that the EDU provides support for academic innovators, that is find ways to get "Fred out of the shed", as Stiles (2006) might have put it. There is some support here for Kolsaker's argument that managerialist attitudes are often acceptable to academics, (Kolsaker, 2008) because they help to make sense of a reality that technology is expanding. The Household Model allows for this, because many technological innovations do require the support of central IT support, if they are to work. As respondent C observed, IT departments have a quite proper concern about protecting their networks. The EDU is in a position to provide a valuable mediation service between the academic innovator and the central support service, explaining why the innovation will be valuable to the university and explaining to the innovator what the practical limitations might be. As the EDU is usually associated with the management and development of the institutional VLE, which is something that IT services are also heavily involved in supporting, because of the requirement that it is constantly available, there is already a relationship between the two which can be exploited for the good of the university.

Where staff do wish to develop new technological approaches, the EDU is presented with a dilemma. In a Humboldtian research engaged development model, experiment

must be encouraged. In the case of the EDU, most of this experimentation is likely to be with technology. Implicit in an experimental approach is the fact that, sometimes, experiments are unsuccessful. This can lead the EDU open to a charge of self indulgence or "hobbyism", (Talis, 2009) as often expensive projects are seen to fail, yet in order to succeed it must run the risk of failure. The household model illustrates one of the ways in which EDUs manage this dilemma, which is through the use of award schemes. Where a skill is not available locally it has to be brought in, and this practice has two benefits. First, it allows academic staff time and funding to develop projects that address particular needs relating to their own discipline, even allowing for the weaknesses in such schemes discussed by Morris and Fry (2006) above. Secondly, it promotes what Lave and Wenger (1991) would call "legitimate peripheral participation", both of the EDU in the academic community of practice, and of the academic in the development community. There was relatively little evidence in the interviews that the educational development unit saw that it had any role in controlling what staff do in these schemes. There were increasing concerns about accountability which appeared to be much more about ensuring that something has been done with the funding, rather than criticising what has actually been done with it. The challenge for the future may be to continue to develop those kind of projects in a climate where there is less funding available for "pump-priming". There is evidence in the literature that increasingly sophisticated approaches to working with teaching colleagues are being developed, such as the Carpe Diem project at Leicester university, described by Salmon *et al*, (2008).   Salmon's work, with its emphasis on finding out what are the priorities of the teaching and learning regime, appears to be a good illustration of the Household Model at work, since it does not impose external, (or for that matter, internal) agendas. For this kind of approach to work, the EDU must be at the centre of the university, open and accessible to all faculties.

Finally, the household model of the EDU as a central, responsive unit that can facilitate small scale development by bringing together the different parts of the university, has considerable value in that it allows the unit to demonstrate what contribution it is making to the development of the learning environment. There was evidence that all the extant units visited could demonstrate some local, and some generic contributions. Site A had its programme of development workshops, site B, the academic technologies panel, site C the development of the anti-plagiarism tool,

and site D its heavy involvement in personal development planning. Generically, all were involved in the provision of teaching awards, and bidding for funding. There is, though, a danger in this approach, which is that the EDU returns to the fragmented narrative from which this study arose. The respondents did see the university as a collegial institution, where academic and other colleagues work together with each other, and with support staff, with an overall purpose to bring about an increase in knowledge. That implies a willingness to push back boundaries. Evidence for this is provided by their very active involvement in committees, their readiness to work with academic colleagues on matters of interest to those colleagues. They are also genuinely interested a very wide range of activities as described above. However their perceptions are also tempered by a very strong awareness of the instrumental pressures upon the university and a sense of the limitations of what they can realistically achieve.

Recommendations

There seems little doubt that there exists a view of university that is based on a rather instrumental view of the needs of society, as those needs are understood by fund holders and policy makers, and that university managers are strongly influenced by this view. As the experiences of site E, and to a lesser extent site A, suggest, development units need to understand the power politics that are at work within any university. Such politics require a rather more sophisticated response than might be indicated by a simplistic understanding of power. In fact, there has been evidence throughout that the respondents showed a high level of sensitivity to the requirements of colleagues, best expressed by respondent E1's remark that "we don't tell people how to teach, we like to have conversations". The household model, with its emphasis on interaction between the faculties, support services and the EDU, clearly promotes conversations.

As has been noted, academic colleagues are skilled at subverting, or at best paying lip-service to external agendas, so the first recommendation based on this study is that those working in development units continue to concentrate on developing productive professional relationships with colleagues. The household model suggests that the

EDU might find it useful to consider where, and with whom, the most productive conversations might take place. As with any successful relationship, such conversations are likely to involve more listening than talking, and EDUs must be prepared to be constructively critical. EDUs, are, of course small, but the model indicates that it is important that they give a high priority to involvement with academic departments and faculties. Such work might involve working through committees, and responding to problems that arise in these committees, but also supporting faculty teaching and development events. A successful unit cannot be seen as the sole origin of development itself, even where it is generating ideas, and certainly cannot be seen as an agent of external policymakers. It is more likely to be successful if it can give the impression that it is there to develop colleagues' own ideas, in short, to concentrate on developing the feedback loop in the model.

The data discussed in chapter four indicated very strongly that the educational development unit is a key locus for the exploration of new technology, and this is a view supported by the literature, in particular Gosling's (2001) study. While there are certainly enthusiasts for technologies within the faculties who do some impressive work, the model of the lone enthusiast is not sustainable in the long term, because there is rarely any infrastructure for disseminating their achievements. If it is the case as argued here, that educational development units have established good relations with academic colleagues, then it seems appropriate to recommend that they continue to explore the affordances of new technology, while endeavouring to resist the temptations of over enthusiasm and "hobbyism". As this study has shown, attempts to impose technological, or any other type of, solutions on colleagues are likely to be counter productive. However, in an external environment that emphasises accountability, simply being seen as a locus of technical expertise is a risky strategy, as it is often perceived that this kind of expertise can easily be bought in. The risk in doing so is that the interaction between developers and the developed implicit in the household model is lost. It may be better for the EDU to ensure that it becomes associated with institutional technologies, certainly the VLE, but also with services such as Turnitin, e-portfolio software, and electronic voting systems. The EDU does need to ensure that it is perceived as a source of expertise in how these tools can be integrated into the curriculum. At the same time, it does need to be highly supportive of colleagues who wish to experiment with new technologies. The example of the

academic technologies panel at site B is a good example of what appears to be a promising approach. As the model indicates, one of the outputs of this kind of interaction is feedback to those largely outside the interaction loop, as innovations are developed and reported on in the literature.

Educational development units are small, and often perceived as marginal in the structures of universities. Yet it is possible to argue that they have made a significant contribution to the cross disciplinary development of pedagogical knowledge in universities, through the promotion of new technologies, but also by providing a space in which colleagues can reflect on their own professional practice. This is no small achievement, and so the final recommendation of this study is that those working in development units make a much more concerted effort to draw attention to what they have achieved, and why it has been successful. The problem EDUs face is not that those working in them are unduly modest, although if they were, that is not something that could logically have emerged from the data. Rather, it is that they are too small to have a wider impact. This is unlikely to improve. The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund will, from 2010 no longer be directly earmarked for teaching improvement, and institutions are likely to be tempted to divert the funding to other priorities. As this study has shown an EDU working along the lines suggested by the household model plays a valuable intermediary role between the senior management at the centre of an institution, and the devolved, but still very powerful faculties. As with the example of personal development planning at site D, the educational development unit played a crucial role in ensuring that the new policy was accepted, through making a significant effort to match it with the values held by those faculty members who had to adopt it.

Suggestions for further research

The principal contribution made by this study has been to show that a conception of educational development as a modernist project remedying a deficit model is largely unhelpful. Instead, it is proposed that EDUs are likely to be more effective if they concentrate on small scale, highly specialised areas of work, which they identify primarily through the building of relationships with the faculties in their host university. However, as with any study, some limitations have to be acknowledged.

As the study was conducted entirely from the point of view of those working in EDUs, there is a clear need for a parallel study of academic staff, as the clients of these units, to establish the extent to which they share the values of communication and feedback implicit in the household model. This would greatly assist units to establish which of their activities they should prioritise, if only to assist in developing a survival strategy in a complex political and economic environment. Even with the forthcoming removal of direct funding for teaching and learning enhancement there was a sense of optimism about the future of educational development in the four extant units visited, but the example of site E and, to some extent site A, does suggest that optimism alone will not be an adequate basis on which to build a future. It is the experience of sites A and E that raises a question to emerge from this study, and that is about the effect the host university has on the EDU. In a small study such as this, no conclusion can be drawn from the fact that sites A and E were pre 1992 universities, and B, C and D all former polytechnics, but given the emphasis that this study has placed on the importance of the relationship between the EDU and its host university, the fact that at sites A and E, the work of educational development seemed to be afforded a lower priority merits further investigation.

This is not meant to be a quantitative or predictive study, and so does not attempt to make generalisations about EDUs. The aim is to identify those practices that are meeting with some success in a complex environment, and to model units' relationships with their host university. The more data that can be gathered, the more it will be possible to identify such practices and provide data to support arguments that it is worth continuing to invest in educational development units. There are also issues that space has precluded, but are of some relevance to the questions asked in this study. As noted in chapter 3, part of the preliminary work for this study involved attending appropriate conferences, and it was noticeable that a relatively small proportion of those attending were disciplinary academics. How far do development units in different universities collaborate with each other, if they do does it detract from their work with the disciplines, and what does that reveal about how conceptualisations of teaching are formed? Is there an emerging discipline of "educational development", as some studies, and the emergence of groups such as SEDA and ALDINHE suggest? If there is, would that tend to undermine the collaboration between developers and academic staff discovered in this research, by

replacing a normative agenda derived from the perspective of external stakeholders, with an agenda derived from a theoretical conceptualisation of educational development? In other words, if a coherent valorised narrative of educational development is to emerge, exactly where is it to emerge from?

Finally, this study has, largely for reasons of space, been limited to a single jurisdiction, namely England. The author piloted the research instrument in a development unit in the Republic of Ireland. In fact, there were more similarities than there were differences between the pilot findings and this study, but there would be considerable interest in a comparison of the practices of development units in different countries, which may have very different political systems. What is the role of educational development in countries that have not seen a need to directly fund enhancement activities in teaching and learning? Is it perceived differently, and if so, is that related to the funding model? Would the household model still operate in an environment that placed more emphasis on quantitative benchmarks? Such a study would be able to make a significant contribution to the debate about what constitutes educational development, and whether the localism identified in this study is something related to the English system, or is also found in other countries.

Conclusion

Educational development units have enjoyed something of a golden age over the last decade or so, and that may be the source of some of the optimism identified in the interviews. However at the time of writing, early in 2010, there are ominous signs that public funding may not be as generous as it has been in the past. It is likely that the staff of educational development units will continue to work on teaching and learning enhancement, but the units themselves may be hard pressed to survive in their current form. There remain grounds for optimism about the future of the EDU. This study started with a discussion of the fact that educational development units were relatively new features of the Higher Education landscape, and expressed concerns that difficulties about articulating what they were charged with doing may be a longer term threat to their existence. Land (2004) may have correctly categorised educational development as a modernist project, but in fact this study has shown that in practice

those working in development units appear to have rather post-modern sensibilities, in that their reluctance to try and normalise teaching practices shows that they are well aware that there are multiple validities within the modern higher education institution, and that they are highly responsive to them.

While the existence of external pressures on higher education institutions to deliver particular agendas is unarguable, those working in educational development units appear to have developed a very pragmatic understanding of how to work with colleagues to develop an effective model of teaching. The household model implies that they do have a holistic and wide ranging view of the university, interested in what is going on in multiple disciplines and thus are extremely valuable members of the academic community, providing a practical bridge between the aspirations of fundholders and senior managers and the practical realism of what academic colleagues can achieve on the ground. This is particularly so in the area of technological innovation, where a remarkable assortment of developing and emergent personal and social technologies distract students from institutionally owned technologies, running the considerable risk that what academic staff expect of learners, in terms of the way they go about studying, is rather different from the practices of the learners themselves. For example, there is little point in academic staff providing lengthy articles via an institutional VLE if, as JISC, (2007a) suggests, the students are constructing their own knowledge through blogging, producing web sites, engaging in Facebook groups and downloading relevant resources to their iPods. The respondents seemed to be aware of this, which goes some way to explaining their acceptance of an obligation to look at these technologies.

The data gathered in the course of this study suggests that the educational development unit does play an important part in assisting the university, here understood the sense of a community of scholars, to articulate its values around the concepts of learning and teaching, and plays a vital part in bringing innovations to that community, and in the longer term the diffusion of innovations through that community. While the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund may well have been instrumental in establishing educational development units, technological innovation continues to take place, both in terms of new products and services, and in new approaches to pedagogy. As academic faculties are, quite properly, inclined to give

priority to developments in their own discipline, there is a continued need for a department that prioritises a focus on innovation and development in both pedagogy and technology, which remains independent of any discipline, yet is willing and, most importantly, able, to engage with all the disciplines that make up the university. The household model, with its emphasis on interaction between different communities, illustrates how the educational development unit may be able to fulfil that role.

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Appendix A Educational Development Units in England January 2008

Institution	EDU name	Web address
Birmingham University	Learning Development Unit	http://www.ldu.bham.ac.uk/
Imperial College London	Centre for Educational Development	http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/edudev/
King's College London	King's Institute of Learning & Teaching	http://www.kcl.ac.uk/learningteaching/
Leeds University	Learning Development Unit	http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/
London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE)	Teaching & Learning Centre	http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/TLC/
Manchester University	Teaching & Learning Assessment Office	http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/tlao/ (But there are also Faculty based units here too)
Nottingham University	Staff & Educational Development Unit	http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sedu/
Oxford University	The Oxford Learning Institute	http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/
Sheffield University	Learning & Teaching Support Unit	http://www.shef.ac.uk/tlsu/
University College	Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching	http://www.ucl.ac.uk/calt/index.php
Warwick University	Centre for Academic Practice	http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/cap/
Bath University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Office	http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/
Birkbeck, University of London	Centre for Learning & Professional Development	http://www.clpd.bbk.ac.uk/
Bradford University	Teaching Quality Enhancement Group	http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/tqeg/
Brunel University	Learning & Teaching Development Unit	http://www.brunel.ac.uk/life/study/ltdu/
City University	Educational Development Centre	http://www.city.ac.uk/edc/
East Anglia University	Centre for Staff & Educational Development	http://www.uea.ac.uk/csed/
Essex University	Learning & Teaching unit	http://www.essex.ac.uk/ltu/
Exeter University	Education Development Unit	http://www.services.ex.ac.uk/edu/

a

University	Unit	URL
Goldsmiths, University of London	Centre for Excellence in Learning Technology	http://www.gold.ac.uk/learning/resources/index.html
Hull University	Centre for Learning Development	http://www.hull.ac.uk/cld/
Kent University	Unit for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching	http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/
Lancaster University	Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching	http://luvle.lancs.ac.uk/celt/celtweb.nsf/HomePage?OpenPage
Leicester University	No unit as such, but what appears to be a wiki based site to which all staff can contribute to.	http://www.le.ac.uk/teaching/homepage2.html
Queen Mary	Educational & Staff Development.	http://www.esd.qmul.ac.uk/
Reading University	Centre for the Development of Teaching & Learning	http://www.rdg.ac.uk/cdotl/
Royal Holloway	Educational Development Centre	http://www.rhul.ac.uk/educational-development/centre/
Salford University	Educational Development Unit	http://www.edu.salford.ac.uk/
School of Oriental & African Studies	Learning & Teaching Unit	http://www.soas.ac.uk/ltu/
Surrey University	Centre for Learning Development	http://portal.surrey.ac.uk/cld
Sussex University	Teaching & Learning Development Unit	http://www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/
York University	Academic Support Office	http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/aso/ Contains an e-learning development team, and a "teaching and learning enhancement forum" (No permanent staff)
Anglia Ruskin University	University Centre for Teaching & Learning * (name to be changed)	http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/central/uclt.html
Bournemouth University	Academic Support	http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/academicsupport/
Brighton University	Centre for Learning and Teaching	http://staffcentral.brighton.ac.uk/clt/
Canterbury Christ Church University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit	http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/learning-teaching-enhancement-unit/
Central England University	Staff & Student Development Unit	http://www.sssd.uce.ac.uk/about/
Central Lancashire University	Learning Development Unit	http://www.uclan.ac.uk/ldu/
Chester University	Learning & Teaching Institute	http://www.chester.ac.uk/research/learning_and_teaching.html
Coventry University	Centre for the Study of Higher	http://www.coventry.ac.uk/ched

Institution	Education	URL
Edge Hill University	Teaching & Learning Development Unit	http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/Sites/TLD/index.htm
Gloucestershire, University of	Academic Development Unit	http://www.glos.ac.uk/adu/
Hertfordshire University	Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching	http://perseus.herts.ac.uk/uhinfo/administration/celt/celt-home-page.cfm/
Kingston University	Academic Development Centre	http://www.kingston.ac.uk/adc/intro.htm
Leeds Metropolitan University	Skills for Learning – not identifiable as a unit – mostly web pages	http://skillsforlearning.leedsmet.ac.uk/index.shtml
Lincoln University	Teaching & Learning Development Office	http://visit.lincoln.ac.uk/C13/TLDO/TLDO_Public_Web/index.htm
Liverpool Hope University	Centre for Learning and Teaching	http://www.hope.ac.uk/learningandteaching/
Liverpool John Moores University	Learning Development Unit	http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/lid/ltweb/
London Metropolitan University	Centre for Academic & Professional Development	http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/capd/
London South Bank University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit	http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/lteu/
Manchester Metropolitan University	Learning & Teaching Unit	http://www.ltu.mmu.ac.uk/
Northampton, University College	Office of Learning & Teaching	http://www.northampton.ac.uk/departments/learningteaching/
Northumbria University	Learning & Teaching Enhancement -	Http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/lts/l_and_t_enhancement/?view=Standard
Oxford Brookes University	Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development	http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/
Plymouth University	EdAlt	http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=8199
Portsmouth University	Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement	http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/dcqe/
Sheffield Hallam University	Learning & Teaching institute	http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/index.html
Staffordshire University	Learning Development and Innovation	http://www.staffs.ac.uk/uniservices/learningdev/
Sunderland University	Learning Development Services	http://my.sunderland.ac.uk/web/services/lds/ahome
Thames Valley University	Educational Development Unit -	Http://www.tvu.ac.uk/research/The_Graduate_School/Educational_development_unit.jsp

| Winchester University | Learning & Teaching (Virtual?) | http://www.winchester.ac.uk/learning |
| Wolverhampton University | Centre of Excellence in Learning & Teaching | http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=6939 |

d

Appendix B: Development of the Interview schedule for EDU respondents

Objectives of the semi structured interviews were to discover:

A) What is the history of the unit in this case. Why was it set up, what were its predecessor units?

B) What are the main drivers of the unit's activity?

C) To what extent does this EDU support research development? E.g. does it provide training in the use of research tools like Nvivo, Refworks etc. What is its relationship with the library service

D) Does it offer UROS type programmes, or an undergraduate degree by research.

E) Do its principal clients regard themselves as researchers rather than teachers?

F) What models of the university does the evidence from this case study point to?

G) What role does the unit play in introducing new technologies into the curriculum?

H) What is the background of the staff of the Unit?

I) What are the units' principal funding sources? (Grants, research, bids etc.)

J) Is there an identifiable model of educational development

N.B. The sub questions are envisaged as prompts in case the question doesn't work out.

Interview schedule

1) Can you tell me a little bit about the history of the Unit? (A)
   a. When was it formed
   b. Were there any predecessor units?
2) Can you describe your relationship with the rest of the university (B)
   a. Do you have any influence over the development of the university's learning and teaching strategy
   b. Which, if any committees outside the unit do you serve on
   c. Is it fair to say that you have a particular client group you tend to work with more than others, and do you regard this as problematic (e.g. would you like to expand your client base) (E, F)
   d. Do you have much direct relationship with students (other than staff who are also students)
3) What issue do you think is currently taking up most of your time. (B)
   a. What do you hope to achieve through your work on this issue

e

b. If I could ask you to a look back a month, and then six months, and then a year, would the issues be the same. (Do you expect them to be the same in, one, six, or twelve months from now.)

4) Do you think there are other issues that are more important for the unit to be working on (B, F)

5) Who do you report to? (B)

6) Does the unit play any role in Quality assurance events – validations, course reviews and so forth (B, F, J)
   a. If it does, can you tell me a little bit about this role? Is there anything you usually do in these events for example?
   b. Do you play any role in teaching evaluations, either conducting evaluations yourself

7) Who would you say were the principal consumers of your services (E)
   a. Have you got any idea of the percentage of staff who actually use your unit? (attendance at workshops, spontaneous requests for assistance and so on?)
   b. Do you have any particular relationships with support services (e.g. library and computing services)
   c. Would you say most of your work was done at the instutional, departmental or individual level
   d. Do you do any work with people outside the university?

8) Do you have much interaction with students (for example do they make demands on your services at all). Or do you take the lead in surveying student opinion (for example, do you have any involvement in the university's NSS Returns. Or do you conduct surveys, hold focus groups, or use any other method to collect student views about specific issues, such as technology provision, learning spaces, assessment etc.) (C, D)

9) Do you have a view on the role of the university in general? (F)
   a. As a teaching institution?
   b. As a research institution?
   c. As a community institution

10) What do you believe the purpose of university teaching is? (F, J)
   a. For example are there any models inform your practice (e.g. Reflective practitioner, social practice, transmission theories?)

11) Is there some sort of scheme in the university for rewarding excellent teaching, (e.g. a teacher fellowship scheme, or an educational development scheme) (F, J)
   a. Is it project based, or just a simple reward
   b. Is the unit involved in running this – does it select the recipients, set out the application procedure,
   c. If it's project based does the unit play a role in managing the projects

12) Do you have any role in supporting national initiatives (such as PDP?) (B)
   a. What is your role?
   b. How effective do you think you are in achieving the targets

13) Do you have any particular role in supporting technology in your unit (G, H)
   a. Any particular technologies?

14) Do you find that you have to challenge colleagues – e.g. to adapt their attitudes to teaching to get the best out of a technology. (G, H)
   a. Turnitin
   b. Open access (e.g. Repositories)

       c.   Discussion groups

15) Are you involved in the production of electronic learning materials. If so, what sort of materials, and what role do you play. (G)
       a.   How innovative would you say you as a unit are in your approaches to things like teaching and learning. Do you use things like Second Life, , facebook, podcasting etc. (Or do you get requests from colleagues that you feel you need to support?

16) Do you offer training sessions (whether formal "workshop-style" sessions" or informal one to one" sessions? (J)

17) I know you have a web page, but is there any internal intranet. And if there is, what sort of presence do you think is appropriate there? (F, G, J)

18) Do you use RSS feeds or similar technologies to pick up on the latest from colleagues blogs (e.g. I have a Google alert for University of Lincoln stories.) (F, G, J)

19) What would you say the biggest obstacles to your work are? (A)
       a.   Organisational? (e.g. colleague/senior management apathy)
       b.   Bureaucratic? (funding, legal)
       c.   Technical? (Unreliable infrastructure etc.)

20) Do you do any research yourself? (D, F)
       a.   Into matters related to the work of the EDU
       b.   In your own discipline?

21) Can we talk a little bit about the way the office is configured? (J)
       a.   Are you close to or part of an academic department or faculty?
       b.   Do you work with each other
       c.   Do you have your own offices? If not how do you find space to concentrate?

22) Do you have any sort of teaching/demonstration room, where for example you can demonstrate new technologies, or facilitate others use of new technologies in their own teaching? (J)

23) Can you tell me a little bit about your own career (H)
       a.   What was your previous post
       b.   Did you start out with the intention of going into ED?
       c.   Can you tell me what sort of contract you are on (permanent, full time, temporary, part time…)

Appendix C Consent form (Anonymised).

Consent forms signed by all research participants are in the author's possession.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study of the role of the educational development unit in the modern university The purpose of my research is essentially to find an intellectual and strategic basis for the continuance of educational development units after the end of the TQEF funding in 2010. In particular I am interested in finding out about the way staff working in educational development units understand different functional, structural and behavioural models of universities.

The Name of unit was selected as a possible participant in this study because after I reviewed the web sites of all the EDUs in the country, the unit seemed to be involved in a wide variety of activities that were compatible with the models I have identified in the literature. Secondly I wish to test the hypothesis that models of educational development differ in research intensive universities and those that place more emphasis on teaching.

Should you agree to participate, I would like to visit the university and interview as many staff in the Educational Development unit as possible to discuss their own views of the purposes of the university. I do not anticipate that any individual interview will take more than an hour. I would also like to take exterior and interior photographs of the buildings, used by the units and take copies of any publicly available documents produced by the unit. Such photographs and documents will be used for triangulation of data only, and not published in the final report.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified as being relevant to the university and department , or any individual will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Any information gathered will be used primarily for the purposes of assessment at the University of Lincoln. If any data gathered in the course of this research is to be used in any other publication further permission will be sought from you

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relation with the University of Lincoln. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation
at any time without prejudice. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you have any additional questions later, please contact **Julian Beckton** at ***(jbeckton@lincoln.ac.uk)*** who will be happy to answer them.
You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

_____

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____ _____

Signature   Date

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher   Date